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NEMO, KING OF THE TRAMPS; OR, The Romany Girl's Vengeance.

A STORY OF THE GREAT RAILROAD RIOTS.

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TAIN," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I. TWO TRAVELERS.

Who does not remember the riot summer of 1877?

How hot it was! For weeks not a drop of rain fell over half the Union. The white dust covered everything as with a veil, and the leaves curled up under their powdery covering, afraid to look out till the falling of the night-dews.

In the midst of this sultry season a slight, handsome and delicate-looking boy, who seemed

as if he might have been about sixteen, and whose dress indicated poverty if not want, plodded wearily along one of the roads that led from the coal regions of Pennsylvania toward Pittsburg.

The sun was near the zenith, and the dust rose in little clouds at every step taken by the young wayfarer, but he still pressed on; for he saw before him a forest, which promised him shade, coolness and rest.

The country around was of that rich and smiling description which is apt to raise envy in the bosom of the poor man, as he casts his eyes on pleasant mansions in the midst of their fields and orchards, and contrasts it with his own dusty path.

The boy in question seemed to feel this, for he uttered a heavy sigh, just ere he entered the wood, as he caught sight of the gleaming glass roof of a conservatory several miles away, at the side of a large and handsome stone house.

"There is the place," he muttered, half aloud; "but for all the good it will do me, I might as well be in Siberia."

The house which he had noticed lay on the other side of the wood which he was entering, and he soon lost sight of it; but the refreshing

coolness of the green beeches and oaks turned the current of his thoughts to pleasanter themes than his own poverty.

"After all," he said, aloud, baring his head to the light breeze that stirred under the trees, so different to the sultry calm outside; "after all, there is some pleasure, even in a tramp's life."

"You jest bet your sweet life there is, sonny," unexpectedly answered a voice near him, and the boy turned with a start to see a man of huge frame and rough appearance lying on his back under a tree, staring at him.

There was no question as to the calling of this lazy stranger. From his fragment of a battered straw hat, his uncombed hair and beard, through all his rags, down to his bare, dirty feet, he was a perfect specimen of the true summer tramp.

"Well, sonny, how d'yer like the road?" he asked, in a condescending tone. "Hain't been on it long, I see."

"How do you know that?" asked the other, a little sulkily.

The tramp grinned in reply.

"'Cause o' yer boots. You ain't no real tramp yet. Likely's not, yer've got some stamps left—hey, sonny?"



"I CAME AS A FRIEND, OLIVER CALVERT, BUT AS A FOE YOU HAVE RECEIVED ME. LOOK TO YOURSELF!"

"If I have, I know enough to keep them," was the dry answer, and the boy was turning away when the big tramp rose quickly to his feet and gave a couple of strides, saying:

"We'll see about that, my gay rooster."

"Keep off!" angrily cried the youngster, as the other advanced. "What do you take me for?"

As he spoke, out came a little pistol from his pocket, which he cocked with a sharp click that meant business; and so the big tramp seemed to think, for he halted and began to laugh in an uneasy sort of way, saying:

"Git out, pard, I was only foolin'. I wouldn't hurt yer for ten dollars."

"I don't intend you shall," retorted the undaunted boy, sharply. "Who are you?"

"Me? Why, sonny, I'm jest the nicest feller, when yer know me, as ever yer *did* know. That's so. I'm Billy Barlow. The Boss of the Bummers, I am. What might your name be?"

"It *might* be anything, but you can call me Jack if you're anxious," answered the boy, in the same sharp, suspicious way he had used all along.

Billy Barlow grinned quite amicably and extended his huge horny hand.

"Put it there, my gay rooster," he cried. "Fur a little cuss as you air, you hev a heap o' grit. Spunky Jack you air and shall be till—Where be you goin', pard?"

The boy shrugged his shoulders in an impatient manner.

"What does that matter to you? Where are you going yourself?"

"Me? Why, sonny, I'm a'most home. We've got our reg'lar roostin'-place in these parts. Sich a gang you never seen, and sich a place. Didn't yer never hear tell o' the Wanderer's Home?"

"No," answered the boy, more quietly, and putting away his pistol as he spoke. "Where is it?"

"In the middle of these woods. If you don't live in these parts, but air a real true bummer, I'll show yer. None of these guys know whar it is, nor the cops nuther. Now, sonny, whar be you from, and whar air you goin' to? That's biz."

"Where I'm from is no business of yours. Where I'm going to is my own. I'm on my feet, because I've no money for cars; and if you suspect me to be a spy, why, I can go my way alone."

The big tramp stared at the slight frame of the boy with mingled wonder and mirth.

"Waal, Spunky Jack," he remarked, "you air a rooster and no mistake. Come along, my little bantam, and we'll show you life in real 'arnest—"

"Hush!" said the boy, suddenly lifting his hand. "What's that? Wheels coming?"

"Ob, let 'em come," answered the tramp, disdainfully. "We can't git anything out of the folks whar drives at this time o' day. It's the farmers as we tackles, pard."

The boy made no answer but to stare down the forest road, where a distant white cloud of dust could be seen coming rapidly on, through which gleamed the bright wheels of a carriage. Billy Barlow watched him with much curiosity, for such a tramp he had never seen before. Slender in frame and handsome in face, with long flaxen curls that almost hid the back of his neck, flowing from under a broad hat, his dress was a puzzle to the veteran tramp. He was well shod, and his brown velvet jacket and light trousers were of good cut, though old and worn. Still, there was a certain jaunty air to the whole dress, shabby as it was, that ill suited Billy's ideas of the true tramp; and visions of detectives began to flit through his mind as he looked.

But, meantime, the carriage came dashing on, and the boy continued to watch it with the same eagerness. It came from the direction of the great house with the conservatory he had noticed on the other side of the wood.

Presently it swept by; a handsome open phaeton and pair, driven by a black coachman, and in it sat a grand-looking, white-headed old gentleman, with a richly-dressed young lady by his side, while on the front seat was a stern-looking man, with a short black mustache.

Billy Barlow watched the boy and saw his face change as the carriage came nearer. He turned very pale and stared at the occupants with an intentness that showed that he recognized them.

Then, as the vehicle passed within a few feet of them, he dashed out into the road with a sort of scream, and fired his little pistol at the man with the black mustache.

It was all over in a moment.

The tramp saw the flash; heard the sharp crack of the little weapon; saw the man start, throw up his arms and fall back on the seat; heard the lady's shriek and the startled cries of the occupants of the carriage; and then he turned and darted into the wood, plunging into the thickets in desperate haste.

The "Boss of the Bummers" knew that the place had ceased to be healthy for him; for he had recognized in the occupants of the carriage the millionaire, Senator Calvert, (who owned more than a quarter of the county in which was

situated the Tramp's Paradise, *alias* "Wanderer's Home,") with the Honorable Oliver Calvert, President of the Air Line Road to Pittsburg, both public and influential persons.

Therefore he vanished into the thickest of the wood as fast as he could, fearing immediate pursuit and recognition.

As for the boy, he did not seem to be at all alarmed at the consequences of his actions. He stood there in the road, the smoke still curling from the muzzle of his pistol, and laughed fiercely as he saw the driver, with frantic energy, whip up the horses and dash on at full speed.

"Drive on, Peter," he cried, careless whether he was heard or not. "Mr. Oliver Calvert will carry my mark for awhile, I think. He can't go fast enough to lose that."

Then he calmly blew the smoke from his pistol, threw away the empty cartridge, and inserted a fresh one, after which he returned the weapon to his hip-pocket, and walked quietly into the wood, just as the carriage disappeared round a turn of the road.

He had not gone far when he heard a voice calling out in a hoarse whisper:

"Jack! I say! Spunky Jack!"

"Well, what is it?" asked the boy, impatiently.

Out came big Billy Barlow with a pale face.

"Waal, Spunky, you've done it now. Where are they? Didn't they follow ye?"

"Follow me! I should say not. Old Uncle Peter was so frightened he let his horses run for all they were worth. I hit the villain."

"You mean Jedge Calvert? Golly! Guess ye did, Spunky. Do you know him then?"

"Yes, I know him," was the short answer. "I swore I'd be even with him, and I am. Come, Billy, where's this Tramp's Heaven you told about?"

Billy Barlow was for the time completely conquered by the ascendancy of mind over matter. The great brute was naturally a bully, and had had serious thoughts of trying to take the boy by surprise, with a view to robbing him; but the quickness and ferocity with which this slender youngster had taken his own part had changed the tramp's mind in that quarter, while the sudden assault he had just witnessed satisfied him that his new crony could not be an officer of the law.

"All right, Spunky," he said, cheerfully. "Come along and I'll show yer. Gosh! How yer *did* lay out that feller! Ain't ye 'fraid he'll set the cops on yer?"

"Not he! He knows me too well," answered the boy, in the fierce, scornful way he had used all along. "He knew he deserved it."

"Why, what has he done?" asked Billy.

"None of your business," was the uncivil retort. "Who are your friends out there?"

As he spoke they could see, through the dim arches of the wood, wreaths of smoke and the forms of men and women moving to and fro. Billy Barlow made no answer, for he began to feel that he had stood the back talk of this saucy boy as long as he needed to do, and already he was planning a little revenge for the youngster's rudeness.

When the question was repeated he answered in a dignified tone:

"Them's my pards. We're enterin' the Wanderer's Home. You jest wait till you see our king, and he'll make you keep a civil tongue in your head."

"And who's your king?" asked the boy, in a tone of more curiosity than he had yet exhibited.

"He's Lord Nemo, of Noman's Castle, King of the Tramps," replied Billy Barlow, proudly. "There air only one Boss of the Bummers—that's me—and only one King of the Tramps—that's him—and all the rest is frauds. So now, my gay rooster, we'll see if you don't get your comb cut afore you're many minutes older."

As he spoke, he suddenly clutched the boy's shoulder with a gripe like iron.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRAMPS' RETREAT.

GOOD as were the intentions of Mr. Barlow in regard to seizing the audacious stripling who had shown so much fearless independence, he had not calculated on the wary quickness of his companion. "Spunky Jack," as the tramp had named him, had taken care to keep on the right side of his neighbor, who thus seized him by the left arm; and before Barlow could clutch his other arm, out came the little pistol, and there was another flash and report, followed by an angry cry of pain from the big man, who instinctively released his hold.

In the same instant the boy leaped back, re-cocking his little pistol, and then came a loud shouting and trampling, as a crowd of men and women came running through the woods toward the pair.

Billy Barlow stood grinding his teeth and grinning with pain as he nursed one of his ears, which bled profusely; and the boy, as pale as death, but wearing a singular expression of determination on his young face, set his back against a big tree and seemed resolved to sell his life dearly.

In truth he had reason to fear, for the crowd of people coming toward him seemed made up of desperadoes and viragoes of the worst type; and the hoarse cries with which they rushed on were enough to intimidate the bravest of men.

In another moment they were all around the pair, shouting:

"Who is it, Bill?"

"What's the guy done, cully?"

"Let's mash him!"

"Bu'st the young snoozer with a rock!"

These and other complimentary phrases, delivered from angry men and shrill-voiced women, had no effect on the young stranger, save to make him grasp his pistol more firmly.

When two or three of the tramps made a motion as if to attack him, he called out, in a clear, sharp voice:

"Keep off, bummers! I can drive a nail every time, and I've five shots left."

"Hit him with a rock! He's a spy," growled Billy Barlow, fiercely.

Then the tumult recommenced, fiercer than ever, though not a man ventured to come within twelve feet of the boy, but the women began to scream from the back of the crowd:

"Smash the spy, cullies! Smash him!"

This, however, was what no one of the furious mob had pluck enough to do, and as there were no stones in the wood, it seemed as if hostilities must come to a pause, when—whiz!—one of the women in the rear threw a stick of wood, which just missed the boy's head, and the incident started a fresh cry:

"Clubs! Clubs! Mash the snoozer with a club!"

They were just scattering on their amiable errand, in search of clubs, when a tall man with a huge beard came strolling leisurely up to the circle, at sight of whom the mob paused, while a number of voices began to tell Billy Barlow's story, all together, in various forms.

The tall man listened as he came on, and soon arrived in front of the beleaguered boy, when he spread out his arms and shouted in tones of thunder:

"Stop your noise!"

The effect was immediate. The wildest ruffian in the crowd became silent in a moment, and not even a woman's tongue wagged in the stillness.

Then the tall man stalked to the front of the crowd, and advanced straight on the boy, looking him in the eye.

To the surprise of all, the lad, who had been so fearless before, did not offer to fire at the tall man. Instead, he lowered his pistol, and stood staring at the other in a dazed, bewildered sort of way.

The bearded tramp stopped about three feet from the boy, and looked at him.

Presently he spoke, in a deep, rich voice:

"Give me that pistol, boy. We don't allow them in our camp."

The boy looked up in his face with a forced, painful smile.

"Will you take care of me?" he asked.

"No one shall hurt you," answered the tall man. "I am Nemo, King of the Wanderers."

Without another word the boy uncocked the weapon and handed it to the King of the Tramps, who took it quietly, looked at it all over, and then thrust it under a recess in his own ragged garments.

That done, he turned round and waved his hand with an air of authority.

"I answer for this boy," he said. "Who touches him will have to fight me."

The only person who ventured to say a word was big Billy Barlow.

"Look-a-here, King Nemo," he cried, excitedly; "you ain't doin' the square thing here. This rooster's jest plugged a hole in my ear."

"What did you do to him?" asked Nemo, in the same authoritative way.

"That ain't nothin' to do with it. He's a spy fur the cops."

"You lie!" interrupted the boy, fiercely.

"You know you lie. If I were a detective, would I have shot that man I did to-day? I'm a poor traveler, gentlemen, a tramp like yourselves, Heaven help me—"

"Stop a bit, youngster," interrupted Nemo, with a smile under his huge beard. "You mistake. These gentlemen are not *tramps* at all. That is a vulgar word used by a vulgar world, and quite out of place here. We are *gentlemen*, who live on our means—and those of other people—and wander about for pleasure. We are all wanderers; not tramps."

"That's so!" came from several voices.

"Well, then, I'm a wanderer, too, homeless and friendless," cried the boy, in a shaking voice, "and I thought that here, where you are in the same way, I might find friends; but, as it is—"

And his overstrained young nerves seemed to give way at last, for he burst out in a fit of sobbing.

As it happened, he could have done nothing wiser. The tramps had been looking at his pale, handsome face, with its large, dark eyes, and clustering curls, and more than one woman's heart had softened toward him.

When he broke out crying, a handsome, dark-faced Gipsy girl suddenly darted out of the

crowd and threw her arm round his neck, crying out:

"He shall be my *kammer*,* cullies. Stand clear for Gipsy Nan's *kammer*. Come along, not a man in this crowd shall hurt yer, for I'm Gipsy Nan."

The Gipsy's favor seemed to turn the scale, for the boy could notice a great many Gipsy faces in the crowd, as he went off with Nan and a party of her wild comrades. His reception seemed to be at last assured, and there was no more trouble as he entered the spot which was denominated, by common consent, the "Wanderer's Home," or "Tramp's Paradise."

All the crowd, that had at first surrounded him, began to saunter back to their fires, and he had leisure to look about him and examine the spot.

The wanderers had shown a great deal of taste in their selection of a halting-place. In the midst of dense woods lay a green meadow of some five or six acres in extent, through which ran a brawling brook, sparkling in the sunlight. The grass was deep and soft, dry wood plentiful in the underbrush around, while blackberries and wild raspberries abounded in the vicinity.

There were some hundred or so of tramps of both sexes scattered about, of whom nearly a third were gathered in a camp by themselves, around some carts and tethered horses. This was the quarter of the camp to which the boy was led by Nan, and it was easy to see that its inhabitants were Gipsies. Their dark faces and lustrous eyes would have told this, had not the superior air of comfort which they exhibited made it plain. They had not the haggard and desperate look of the others, and more than one tent had been pitched among them, stretched over arched willow wands, like a wagon tilt, while the other tramps slept on the bare ground.

The presence of horses and a portable forge, in the middle of the camp, showed their occupation still plainer, for the Gipsies have been horse-jockeys and farriers, time out of mind.

They held themselves a little aloof from the other tramps, and comfort reigned in their quarter; for every fire had a pot swinging on a tripod above it, and a savory smell issued from every pot.

"Well, my Betty Rye,"† began Gipsy Nan, familiarly, as she led the boy into her camp, her arm round his neck, "what's your name?"

"Call me Jack," answered the lad, simply; "I've no other name that I've a right to."

"Oh, Jack's good enough for us," said the Gipsy girl, gayly. "Here, cullies, this is Handsome Jack. He looks like a Romanichal, and if he only talked Romany as he ought he'd be no *perdas*."

"What's a *perdas*?" asked the boy, a little timidly, for all his daring seemed to have deserted him since he first beheld the tall figure of King Nemo.

"A *perdas* is a stranger," answered Nan, promptly, "one of the tramps as the Ryes call them. You're a *perdas* now, but if there's no Romany blood in you, I'm a *perdas* myself."

"And what's a Rye?" asked Jack.

"A Rye's a gentleman, in your tongue."

"And you think I'm a gentleman?" asked the boy, in a meaning tone.

Gipsy Nan flashed her dark eyes at him suddenly and gave him such a look that the young stranger flushed up to the temples, ere he was answered.

Then she said, slowly:

"The Romanichal asks no questions, brother. Here's the pot off the fire. Dip in with us and eat, if you're not too proud."

Handsome Jack said no more, but followed her advice with good grace, for he was very hungry.

While they were all crouching round the great iron pot on the ground, the tall form of King Nemo passed by, and all the Gipsies rose and saluted him respectfully.

The boy stranger followed their example, seeming to be much confused, for he did not lift his eyes from the ground as he bowed.

The lordly-looking tramp with the queer name passed closed to Handsome Jack and said in a low tone:

"Come to my hut as soon as you have eaten. I would speak with you."

The boy bowed low, growing scarlet to the roots of his hair, and Nemo passed on. Gipsy Nan heard the words and gave a curious look at her new friend, but said nothing for some minutes, till the King of the Tramps was out of hearing.

Then she observed:

"There's a handsome Rye for you. He's fit to be a king anywhere."

"Oh, he is indeed, indeed!" murmured the boy, in a low tone, "and yet he has seen such suffering."

Gipsy Nan pursed up her lips in a rather disdainful way.

"Suffering!" she echoed. "He never knew

what life was till he turned wanderer and joined the Romanichal. He has sense. He can talk Romany, he can. Pity you can't, my little *perdas*."

The boy made no answer; but stood gazing after the figure of Nemo in the afternoon sunlight. It was, as we have hinted, very tall and imposing, but there was something weird and singular about it. King Nemo stood over six feet in his bare soles, and had the slender, broad-shouldered, slim-waisted figure of a young man in his prime while his long hair and huge dark beard were very thick and curly.

His costume consisted of a motley array of streaming rags of all colors, and it was hard to tell whether they had any shape and cohesion or not, though the fact that those above hung over those below argued that these latter were confined by a belt somewhere under the upper portion of his tatters.

Such was his dress and personal appearance that crowds followed him whenever he went into a village, while the forest of hair that hid his face, from which shone out two great dark eyes, gave him still more the appearance of a maniac.

It was after this figure, stalking into the recesses of the woods that Handsome Jack presently followed, slowly and hesitatingly, as the King of the Tramps strode on.

They passed out of the camp, where the lazy tramps were lying on their backs in the shade, munching the remains of stolen chickens and pigs, or smoking their black pipes, while the bedraggled women nursed their dirty babies; and soon found themselves before a rude shelter of boughs, built before a hollow tree.

Then Nemo turned and said:

"Now, Jacko, what brings you here?"

CHAPTER III.

OLIVER AND THE GIPSIES.

"THE palatial mansion of our honored Senator," as the *Calverton Chronicle* elegantly phrased it; in other words the country house of Senator Calvert was put into a perfect flurry of excitement that afternoon by the arrival of the master's carriage with sweating horses, bearing the news of a daring outrage by highway robbers.

To the people of Calvert county the Senator, with his wealth and station, had always seemed to be a sort of demigod. To hear that his carriage had been attacked in open daylight by a pair of tramps seemed to them like a sacrilege. They would not have believed it but for the mate evidence afforded by the condition of Oliver Calvert, the Senator's nephew, who was brought back to the house, wounded by a pistol-ball, and as pale as if he had seen a ghost.

It was true that the doctor, who was sent for in haste, pronounced the wound slight, a small-caliber bullet having gone through the fleshy part of the shoulder; but none the less the people round Calverton seemed to think the world was coming to an end. As for the wounded man, he seemed to be more cast down by the assault than the nature of the wound warranted, for he remained of a dead white pallor all day, and started apprehensively at every sudden noise in the house, however slight.

"In fact, Oliver," observed Miss Helen Chester, his uncle's ward, "you seem to be a good deal worse frightened than I am, and that's needless."

Miss Chester was a proud, handsome girl, whose fortune brought her many suitors; and rumor had engaged her to her distant cousin, Oliver, more than once, without her knowledge. He was lying on the lounge in the great cool drawing-room as she spoke, and the old Senator was talking earnestly to the doctor in the hall.

Oliver Calvert turned his eyes on Helen with a pleading expression, very different from the stern glance he generally affected, and said:

"You always are cruel to me, Helen, and yet you know I'd die for you."

"You won't die for any one," retorted the lady, sharply. "If I'd been a man, I'd have jumped out of the carriage and found out who those wretches were."

"Did you want me to be killed in earnest?" he expostulated. "Those two ruffians were bent on murder. I saw it in their eyes."

"Which I couldn't, having my back to them. But I only saw one who looked like a ruffian, as we came up. The other seemed to me to be a little boy."

Oliver Calvert turned, if anything, a little paler as she spoke, but made no reply; for, just then, the Senator came bustling back, saying cheerfully:

"Well, Oliver, my boy, the doctor says you'll be all right in a day or two, and I've sent word to the sheriff to have all those tramps turned out of our woods and arrested, so we can find out who it was shot you. I think I should know the big tramp again."

Oliver leaned back with his eyes closed for a moment, and then said:

"It will be no use, sir. They've fled the country before this, and we shall only get the wrong people. Better let them alone. They're dangerous."

"Why, Oliver," exclaimed Helen, amazedly;

"how you talk! Do you think we're to sit down and fold our hands while these wretches take possession of the country? Oh, I wish Harvey was here! He'd—"

She was interrupted by an angry cry from the old Senator.

"How dare you mention that name in my hearing, Helen?"

The young lady tossed her head.

"I don't see why I shouldn't mention Harvey Calvert. He's my cousin, and I always liked him."

The old Senator's face had turned as white as his hair, and his very lips were gray; but his eye glared as he said in trembling tones:

"Helen, I order you to be silent. I will not bear that person's name in this house. I forbade it some years ago, and—"

"And then I was a child. Now I am a woman and I'll not be treated like a baby. Harvey Calvert's your son, and you're an unnatural father—yes, uncle Harvey, I say what I mean. He's your son, and I won't hush for you."

The old Senator knew better than to try and stop his ward when she got into what the servants called "one of her tantrums;" and Miss Helen's tongue was notoriously bitter on such occasions. When she had finished her little burst, he altered his own tone to one of grave sorrow.

"I did not think, Helen, that you would compel me to tear open my old wounds afresh. You were too young to know what was the matter at the time. Let me close the subject now and forever. The person of whom you speak robbed his own father, who loved him as tenderly as ever child was loved, and fled like a thief in the night, enticing with him to ruin a young and pure girl."

"I don't believe it!" was Helen's reply, and as she spoke she sat down and folded her hands on her lap. "I—don't—believe it, uncle. Is that plain?"

"Don't believe it, Helen! Child, ask Oliver."

"I won't ask Oliver! He doesn't know any more about it than you do. I tell you, sir, there's a mistake somewhere. My cousin, Harvey Calvert, never did the base things you say he did. He was incapable of them. It was not in his nature. Was it, Oliver?"

She turned quickly round on Oliver, and found that person gazing at her with a strange apprehensive expression.

"Was what, Helen?" he asked, confusedly.

"Was it in Harvey Calvert's nature to rob his father and betray an innocent girl? You know it was not."

"I don't know, Helen. The evidence was too strong to be resisted. I wish I could disbelieve it," replied Oliver, in his saddest tone. "Heaven knows I loved my poor cousin, Harvey; but it was too plain that he carried off that unfortunate girl, Jacqueline Raynaud, at the very time the Senator was robbed of all those bonds."

Helen gave a short, bitter laugh.

"Yes, I heard about that at the time. Poor Jacqueline! She was very fond of me, and I suppose that's the reason they drove her out of the house. Every one I like gets into trouble here."

Here the old Senator interrupted her with a voice of much severity.

"Helen, I will not have this. Miss Raynaud was made your French governess out of charity to her father and mother, when she was not old enough to teach you anything but the accent. She disgraced us and herself by eloping with a person who never darkens my doors again, and I wish to hear no more of her or him."

As he spoke, the old gentleman, now flushed with impatient anger, began to stride up and down the room, and finally banged the door behind him and went up-stairs.

Helen had folded her arms and was tapping the floor impatiently with one little foot, her face looking set and defiant, when Oliver ventured to say:

"Helen, why will you irritate the Senator in this useless way? He'll never leave you a penny at this rate."

She turned on him with her usual quick impetuosity.

"Oliver Calvert, I verily believe you know something about poor Harvey and won't tell. If so you're a—well, you know."

"Why, Helen," he answered, in his smooth, oily tones, "what a queer notion of yours! How should I know anything of poor Harvey—still more of—?"

"Of Jacqueline—I didn't say you did, but I believe it. She used to be with you a good deal more than with Harvey. So much I remember."

She had turned her head away as she spoke, and was looking out of the window, so that she could not see the peculiar glance shot at her by Oliver.

In that moment the man dropped all his assumed languor and humility, and his dark, heavy-jawed face looked as forbidding as such a face could look. But his voice was as smooth and oily as ever, as he replied:

"You are unjust. I admired Miss Raynaud greatly for her beauty and sprightly ways, but she never cared for me."

* Kammer or cummer, Romany for lover.

† Beti Rai or Rye, little gentleman.

‡ Romanichal; a Gipsy man, as Romanichi is a Gipsy woman, and Romany is the language.

Helen turned quickly and faced him.

"Cousin Oliver, she *did* care for you, and you know it. She told me you had promised to marry her."

He succeeded in smiling after a fashion, but the effort was very much of a sneer as he answered:

"My dear cousin, the girl was deceiving you. Why, it was only the very next day she fled with Harvey."

"I don't know that she did flee with Harvey. You were away, too."

"In Philadelphia, Helen. I can account for every minute of my time. Surely, we went into that matter fully when that wretched boy disgraced us all."

"I don't know that he did disgrace us, Oliver. I know that uncle Harvey flew into a passion and cursed his son without giving him an opportunity to be heard after those bonds were missing. I know that you stood by and said nothing to help Harvey, and that we've never seen him since, and as for the rest, I firmly believe that my cousin Harvey Calvert is as good a fellow as ever breathed, and that some wretch, I don't say who, has put suspicion on him. So there!"

As she spoke, she got up and was sweeping from the room with the dignity of an offended princess, when Oliver arrested her with the remark:

"Stay, cousin Helen, there is no way of misunderstanding you. Probably you mean that I accuse Harvey."

"I did not say who did it, sir."

"You don't say so in words, but you mean it. Probably you think I ran away with Jacqueline, also?"

"If you did, and then deserted her, you would have been the meanest kind of a villain, Oliver Calvert."

"Granted—if. But, as I did neither, it seems to me you're a little unjust to set on me like this, Helen."

"I suppose you think so," she replied, in the driest of tones; "but, I know what I know, Oliver, and as I don't wish to argue the case with you, I'll bid you good-morning."

And she swept out, with her head in the air, while Oliver Calvert lay gazing after her with a dark, evil look, that was his habitual expression when not in the Senator's presence.

"I wonder how much she does know?" he muttered to himself, as she disappeared. "That fool swore she'd keep the secret, and she wouldn't dare to open communication with them now."

He relapsed into a fit of brooding, from which he was roused by the twanging of some stringed instrument, accompanied by the thumping of a tambourine, outside the window.

With a slight grimace of pain, from his wounded shoulder, Oliver rose from the lounge and went to the large windows which opened out on the broad piazza.

Outside the house on the green lawn which was kept so, in that hot season, only by constant sprinkling, stood a picturesque group of Gipsy girls, with a single man of remarkable appearance.

Exceedingly tall, his body covered with a motley collection of rags, his features hidden by a profusion of hair and bushy beard, this strange being had a certain wild dignity in his appearance that compelled respect even from Oliver Calvert, harsh as he was, and domineering by nature.

He had come to the window intending to order off the intruders; but he remained staring with curiosity at King Nemo, for it was none other.

The chief bore in his arms a sort of lute, accompanied by two dark Gipsy girls of remarkable beauty, one of whom carried a tambourine, the other a triangle, while both were gayly attired in scarlet, black and yellow—ragged enough, but picturesque, and suiting their Hindoo faces, and dark, mysterious eyes.

Oliver Calvert hardly noticed them, so much was he attracted by the weird figure of the Gipsy monarch, and it was in tones of some astonishment that he asked him:

"Who in the world are you, and what do you want here?"

"I am the *Boro Rai Romanichal*," answered the wanderer, in a deep, musical voice of singular power and beauty. "*Avata dooi tano juvus giv gitty rikeno rance.*"*

Oliver stared at him and his natural imperious way came back to him as he saw that several of the helpers in the grounds had come near to stare at the ragged monarch.

"What do you mean?" he demanded, angrily. "Confound your gibberish! Talk English."

The Gipsy monarch smiled as he answered in the same melodious tones:

"I am King Nemo, of the Wanderers. We come here only to sing for the pretty lady."

"What pretty lady do you mean?" was the sour inquiry. "I'm not a lady. Just you clear out and don't let me see you round here again."

* I am the Great Lord of the Gipsies and I come with two of my girls to sing a song for the pretty lady.

Here, boys, put these vagabonds out of the gate and let the dogs loose on them if they come again."

Willingly enough the stablemen came up to execute the gentleman's orders, for Oliver was looked upon everywhere as the Senator's heir since the exile of his missing son Harvey, but it was with some caution that they advanced, for any one could see that the Gipsy was a giant of strength and activity.

King Nemo looked at them with his usual appearance of imperturbable calm till they came near, when he suddenly handed his lute to one of the girls, and leaped like a tiger into the midst of the men, sending them over like so many ninepins with straight lunges of his long arms, and putting them to instant and ignominious flight.

That done, he stalked up to the edge of the piazza and said as quietly as if nothing had happened:

"I came as a friend, Oliver Calvert, but as a foe you have received me. Look to yourself!"

Even while he spoke Helen came running out of the parlor window, attracted by the noise, and paused spellbound before the weird figure of the Gipsy king, who, on his part gave a violent start and stared at her as if he were thunder-struck.

Helen recovered herself first and asked:

"Who are you, in Heaven's name?"

"I am Nemo, nobody, a wanderer and an outcast," was the deep reply, in English, and then the Gipsy king stretched out his hands as if invoking a blessing on her. "*Madeval achipalestale, rance!*" he said; then turned and left the spot without another word.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TRAMPS' PLOT.

MR. BARLOW, "Boss of the Bummers," as he probably styled himself, was not by any means unworthy of that title as he sat among his brother tramps under the shade of the "Wanderers' Home."

The gentlemen of the road had had very good luck that day in their visits to the neighboring farmers. Chickens were plentiful in camp, and one party had succeeded in bullying a farmer's wife (during her husband's absence) into letting them roll off a barrel of apple-jack, over which the camp was now holding high festival.

In the center of this particular crowd, proudly seated on the summit of the barrel, was Mr. Barlow himself; and the redness of his face testified that he had done his share toward emptying his throne of the refreshments it had but lately contained.

"Yes, pals," the Boss observed, holding up his battered tin pannikin, "here's the last of it; and, if you're fly to crack a crib, I'll show you where you kin all get so drunk you won't know whether you're standin' on your head or heels."

"Ger'long," shouted an uproarious tramp, in tones of wild delight. "Show us the crib, cullie, and we'll crack it."

"It's a big beak's crib as keeps a hull cellar of wines and sich. I seen it this mornin' from the road," explained the Boss of the Bummers, to which a gray-headed old virago, known as "Fire-faced Martha," responded:

"Ay, cullies, I know the beak. His name's Calvert, and he owns the hull country round here. 'Twon't do to crack his crib, or we'll have all the cops in Pensilucky arter us."

"What do you know about it?" scornfully demanded Billy Barlow. "We're in his woods now, and he dasn't turn us out. 'Cause why? 'Cause he *dasn't*. Hain't you never heard how the people's a-strikin' for their liberties down in Virginny?"

"Well, what's that got to do with cracking old Calvert's crib?" retorted Martha, with a sneer.

"'Cause he and all the rest of the guys is so skeered 'bout the strikes, they dasn't say a word to us tramps till they're sure they're over," triumphantly answered the tramp. "I tell yer the railroad men has struck, and there's gwine to be bloody times this summer, so we may as well take our share of the swag while it's a-goin'. Who's in for it, cullies? Don't want no women. Men's our best holt. Who'll try it to-night?"

At least twenty tramps eagerly cried out that they were ready, and Billy Barlow commenced to lay out his plan of action at once.

"I've been 'round the place and spied it all out. They've got a nigger coachman, two Irish stablemen, a gardener and a lot of women servants. There's the old beak—him they call Senator—he sleeps in the house, and he's no good. Then there's his nevy, the Jedge, him as Spunky Jack plugged to-day, blast him! He ain't got no more fight in him nor a sheep. Then there's the gal they call Helen, and four more wimmin; that's all."

"But where do the men sleep?" asked a tramp, more cautious than his fellows.

"Over the stable," answered Billy. "Six of us kin handle 'em with clubs, and the rest kin clear out the shebang!"

* God bless thee, lady.

† Ready to break into a house. Thieves' patter.

There was a hum of assent among the tramps, till one of them asked:

"Shall we let them in?"

He spoke in a low tone, jerking his thumb toward the Gipsy part of the camp, which was, as usual, separate from the tramps.

Billy Barlow looked disgusted.

"In coorse not! They ain't no good. Keep dark and don't give it away. Likely's not they wouldn't help us. There's Spunky Jack, blast his picter! he's got grit, if he *did* plug me. Wish we could git him in with us. He's got some grudge ag'in' the folks thar. Don't know what it is, but he's thar all the time."

"S'pose I go in among 'em and git him," suggested a little foxy-faced tramp, who went by the name of "Jim, the Faker."

No objection being made, the Faker lounged in among the Gipsies, and soon returned with the report that Spunky Jack was not in camp at all. He had disappeared, and none of the Gipsies knew or pretended to know where he had gone.

Billy Barlow swore a great oath.

"Blow my skin if the young varmint ain't a cop's spy, as I said he was. If I ketch him again, I'll mash him."

"Him and Gipsy Nan went off together. I seen 'em," observed Fire-faced Martha, tranquilly removing a black pipe from her mouth. "You cullies ain't no good to spot nobody. King Nemo was with 'em."

"Then, why in bloomin' blazes didn't you tell us so at first?" asked the Faker.

"'Cause you was goin' to run this 'ere crib-crackin' on your own lay, my bloomin' bum-mer," responded the lady, in a tone of amiable disdain. "Here they come now, if you've got any eyes."

She nodded her head toward the setting sun, and there, between the arches of the wood, could be seen the tall form of King Nemo, advancing with two Gipsy girls by his side.

"Then Spunky Jack's put out," growled the Boss of the Bummers, discontentedly. "That bloomin' Gipsy pal of ourn's sold us out. I votes we moves camp and don't have no more to do with King Nemo, blast his bloomin' picter!"

"How d'yer know they hain't dressed Spunky up like a gal?" asked Martha, in the same cynical tone. "He looked a bloomin' sight more like a gal than a boy when I seen him."

The tramp made no answer, for King Nemo was passing by them, and there was something in his appearance so imposing that the roughest man in camp held him in awe.

The monarch of tatters stalked by his sullen subjects as if he disdained to notice them, and the tramps peered eagerly into the faces of the girls as they went by, to see if either of them was the disguised boy, as Martha had hinted.

There was, however, no mistaking the sex and appearance of the two dark and handsome Gipsy girls. One was Nan and the other bore no resemblance to Spunky Jack. The boy had had heavy flaxen curls, while this girl was a veritable Gipsy, with her shining black coils of straight silky hair and her dark face. She passed by, arm in arm with Nan, chattering Romany, which the tramps could not understand, and the three went into the Gipsy camp.

Then said Billy Barlow with another oath:

"The bloomin' snoozer's lit out. Pals, we must crack that crib to-night, or the cops will be on us."

CHAPTER V.

THE ATTACK.

THE household of Calverton Manor was in that tranquil state of comfort consequent on a cool starlight night with heavy dews, after a day with the thermometer at ninety-eight in the shade.

The lamps were all out, and the only light came from the myriads of fireflies that darted in and out of the open windows and among the branches of the shrubbery.

We say the only light, but in this we are not quite correct, for there were two gleaming points of fire near each other on the front piazza, marking where the Senator and his nephew were quietly enjoying an after-supper cigar.

The servants had all gone to bed, and the white wrapper of Helen had vanished to the coolness of her own apartment; for it was past twelve o'clock, and the moon did not rise till near dawn.

"Well, Oliver," observed the old politician after a long silence, "so you think it wouldn't do to turn those tramps out of my woods?"

"Not just at present, sir. They'll go on their own account very soon."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that they'll gravitate toward Pittsburg in a few days, sir."

"What for?"

"Well, you know, sir, we have information that all the hands on the combined roads of the Pennsylvania Central are going to strike and stop the trains next week. They think they can coerce the company to their terms that way; but we're all ready for them. The Governor's promised to send us all the Philadelphia troops and we'll just mow the rascals down."

"That's right, Oliver. I'm glad the Governor's put down his foot at last. Louis Napoleon knew how to manage them. Plenty of grape-shot—hey, Oliver?"

The old gentleman chuckled as if he was already enjoying the slaughter of his fellow-creatures.

"It's those confounded Communists who've turned Europe upside down, and now they want to do the same by us. Give them—hail Columbia, I say."

Oliver laughed an evil laugh.

"We're all ready for them, sir. But, what I was going to say is that these tramps in your woods are sure to make for Pittsburg when the row begins, and we shall be rid of them for good. Trust me to deal with them when the troops come."

"If you think so, Oliver, all right, but I don't want any more pistol-shots. I thought that fellow must have meant me when he fired at us today."

"I fancy I know him, sir. He must be some discharged employé of the road, who had a spite against me."

"Would you recognize him, Oliver?"

"I think not, sir."

It was too dark to see his face, but his voice trembled slightly as he told the lie. The fact was he knew only too well who had been his assailant, though no one else, not even Helen, suspected it.

"It must be a curious feeling that," began the old Senator, musingly, "to know that a desperate fellow has a spite against you—Hullo, what's that?" He broke off suddenly as something came whizzing by his face and struck the wall behind him with a rap.

In a moment both gentlemen were on their feet, and Oliver exclaimed in a tone of nervous terror:

"It's that fellow again. Throw away your cigar and let's get inside."

He suited the action to the word himself, and was running into the house, when a voice from the shrubbery said, in low tones:

"Don't fear! Look at the paper."

"The paper? What paper?" asked the old Senator, testily; for his pluck was proof against ordinary terrors.

"The paper on the stone. Good night!"

The voice was soft and feminine, but they could hear no rustle in the bushes. There was a screen of shrubbery by the house which might have hidden a dozen people, but neither of the men felt exactly in the mood for going out to examine it, and the Senator observed:

"Well, this is very strange. Give me a match, Oliver."

"Good heavens, sir, do you want to be shot?" asked his nephew, amazedly.

"No, I want to find the paper," answered the old gentleman simply. "No one will shoot me. You can go into the house if you will give me the match."

"Here's my box of fuses, sir," replied Oliver, hastily. "I'll go in and get a gun. I don't like this sort of thing at all. We ought to ring up the men at the stable. There may be burglars around."

"Burglars! Humbug!" answered the stout old Senator, scornfully. "Why, the people would lynch them, if they laid a finger on me, Oliver."

As he spoke he struck a fusee, and Oliver vanished into the house, while his uncle quietly searched the piazza, and found a piece of white paper, tied to a stone, lying behind the chair he had lately occupied.

He picked it up; threw away the stone, and just then the fusee burnt his finger, so that he had to throw that away, too, and unfold the paper in the dark.

The old Senator tried to make enough light to read the missive by puffing violently at his cigar, but he was obliged to light a second fusee before he could decipher the scroll, which bore only these words:

"Fasten the house and call the men."

"A FRIEND."

For a moment the old man felt his heart stand still, for he realized that Oliver's fears had not been misplaced.

Then he turned to go into the house to ring the alarm bell, when there was a shuffling rush of bare feet, and a dozen dark figures leaped upon the piazza from the fringe of shrubbery.

In another moment he was seized from behind, his arms pinioned, while a huge fellow, with a black veil over his face, clutched his throat.

"Now, look a-here, boss," growled this person, shaking him to enforce his meaning; "you jest keep a still tongue, and we won't hurt you. We're poor travelers, we are, and it's the people's turn this summer. Where's the key of your safe?"

The old gentleman was trembling all over with excitement, but he would not answer this.

Billy Barlow (for it was the Boss himself) shook him again, with a furious curse.

"Give it to me, you old thief, or I'll choke the life out of you."

"Indeed, he squeezed so hard that the old gentleman could only gasp and gurgle till he was released.

"Now, then, will you tell, or shall we try

prickin' yer with knives?" asked Billy, savagely, while his companions kept poking sticks into the old man's ribs to give him an idea of what was in store for him.

"It's no use to you. You haven't the combination," gasped the Senator, as soon as he could speak.

"Don't you never mind that. Give us the key and we'll take the combination, too," was the grim reply.

"It's in my desk—in the study," gasped the old man, reluctantly; and in a moment the tramps had him hauled along into the house, where all was still as death, and carried him into the study, where they set him down on a chair, while Billy Barlow shut the door.

Then the tramp struck a match and deliberately lighted a student-lamp that stood on the table, when he looked round the room and spied the large safe in the side wall, where Senator Calvert kept his valuables.

The old man was satisfied to sit there and gasp as if he were much injured to gain time, for he expected every moment to hear the alarm-bell, knowing as he did that Oliver was at liberty.

But Mr. Barlow was too wise to let him escape long. As soon as he had finished his survey of the room, he came up to his prisoner, who was again seized by two of the tramps, when Billy asked:

"Now then, where's the key?"

"In that desk," answered Mr. Calvert, as slowly as he could speak.

The Boss of the Bummers went to the indicated place and pulled out drawer after drawer without seeing the key, throwing the contents of the drawers on the floor with that impartial brutality which distinguished him.

Then he did what he should have done from the first. Turning to the helpless old man who was still held back in the chair, he asked:

"Which drawer is it, boss?"

The Senator indicated the place and Mr. Barlow soon produced the safe-key, with which he approached his prisoner.

"Now then," he said, grimly, "give me the combination or it'll be the worse for your skin."

The old man shut his lips firmly and made no answer.

Billy Barlow approached him closer and drew out of his pocket a knife, which he unclashed and flourished in the air.

"Give me the combination or I'll dig out your right eye."

The old gentleman shuddered and turned pale, but stammered out:

"I've forgotten it—I—I—wrote it down and—"

"You lie, you old thief. Hold him tight, boys, and gag him so he won't holler. I'll have that combination or I'll cut him into small pieces."

The tramps dragged the poor old man back over the chair and one of them crammed a dirty bunch of rags into his mouth, while he struggled with all his force and shouted for help.

Before they could master him Billy had to strike him a savage blow in the face, and when they had him tied hand and foot on the floor the poor old gentleman swooned away in dead earnest, lying like one dead.

Mr. Barlow expressed his disgust at this conduct in the most forcible terms. He had only made his gouging threat in the hope of frightening the old man, and it was clear they could not get the combination from him till he recovered.

"The mean old skunk!" he muttered, as he looked down on the senseless form of the Senator. "We'll have to break it open, arter all, I'm afraid."

"Mebbe the other cove knows it," suggested Jim, the Faker. "The boys must 'a' got him by this time."

"Good scheme," answered Barlow, in a more satisfied tone. "Two of you watch the old snoozer while the rest of us goes for the other."

So saying he opened the door and almost instantly was greeted by the sound of loud shrieks from the upper part of the house, where as he knew the women servants lodged.

"Come along, cullies," growled the Boss, hurriedly. "We've got to choke their pipes, or they'll have the hull country alarmed."

He rushed up-stairs followed by the rest of the tramps and found lights gleaming in the upper story of the house, where four or five half-dressed women were skurrying about with lamps calling to each other to "Get up. Murder, thieves!" and screaming in the intervals of talking.

The cause of their terror was easily explained by the presence of three particularly villainous-looking tramps, who stood in the passage hesitating what to do before the screams of the women.

Billy Barlow was not so wanting in decision. Growling out ferocious curses and brandishing his knife he rushed at the women and told them to stop their noise or he'd do something terrible—he did not specify what.

His ferocious aspect and that of his followers produced the effect he intended, for the fright-

ened girls became silent and were soon driven into a dark lumber-room in the middle of the house, where they were locked in.

Then the tramps commenced a search of the house for the missing Oliver, whom they knew to be somewhere about and found at last one door locked on which they battered in vain till one of the tramps sent it flying from its fastenings and let out a blaze of light.

Then they paused in amazement. There was Helen Chester standing in the middle of the room, with a revolver in her hand while beside her was none other than Spunky Jack himself, the missing boy leveling a double-barreled gun at Billy Barlow.

CHAPTER VI.

SPUNKY JACK.

"KEEP off, as you value your lives!" cried the boy, as the masked tramps made their appearance at the door. "I know who you are, and help's coming."

The sight of the lad whom they knew to be so determined caused the tramps to recoil out of range, and Billy Barlow growled out:

"I knowed it. I knowed he was a spy. How did he git in here?"

Jim, the Faker, drew his leader aside.

"Let's draw his fire and rush him," was the sagacious tramp's advice. "Git the old man up and shove him in, while some of us gits in at the window."

The counsel suited Mr. Barlow well, for he did not relish exposing his own carcass to the aim of the dare-devil Spunky.

The tramps scattered, leaving two of their number to watch the door while the others searched every room in the house, without success, to find Oliver Calvert. Then they proceeded to the study, where they found the poor Senator opening his eyes, and mercilessly hauled the old man up-stairs to the door of the besieged room.

Watching their opportunity, all uttered a simultaneous volley of oaths and rushed into the room, holding the helpless Senator up before them as a shield.

But, what was their amazement to find the room empty!

Spunky Jack and his fair partner had vanished, and the open window showed whither they had fled, for it opened on a railed gallery that ran all round the house.

In another moment Bill Barlow was outside, followed by his companions, and met the other party that had been appointed to go this very way to take the beleaguered ones in the rear.

But no one, inside the house or out, had seen the fugitives.

"Then there's a passage inside, and that bloomin' spy's in the house still," cried the Boss, angrily. "Come on, cullies; he can't keep out of the way long."

Such was his eagerness to punish the spy, that Mr. Barlow had almost forgotten the matter of the safe key combination, till he found the poor Senator lying bound on the floor of Helen's room, all alone.

Hastily ordering him to be watched, the tramp commenced a vigorous search of the room, and soon discovered a side door, which opened on a little stairway up into the loft.

It was locked, but readily yielded to force, when the party rushed up and found themselves in a dark loft, used as a lumber-room, to all seeming untenanted by living beings.

Into all the corners they rummaged, and were soon rewarded by a fresh discovery, though not the one they sought.

Spunky Jack and Helen were not in the loft, but some one else was. Crouched up in a corner, behind some old broken bedsteads, was the Honorable Oliver Calvert, pale as death; and he offered no resistance as they hauled him out, hurried him down-stairs by the middle stairway, before unnoticed, and took him into the library.

"Never mind Spunky. We've got the cully who'll blow the gaff now," observed the Boss, triumphantly. "Now, then, stranger, what's the combination of this safe? Tell us quick, or we'll jest rip it right out of you."

Up to this time Oliver had not said a word, but now he gasped out:

"Don't kill me. I'm in your power. It's 8, 5, 3, 7."

The tramp repeated the numbers after him slowly, as he went to the safe.

"Very well, my bloomin' snoozer, if it ain't jest them numbers, you'll find it pretty hot for you."

Oliver made no reply as he sat on the chair to which they had forced him, and the Boss of the Bummers proceeded to open the safe, which he effected without further trouble.

As soon as the tramps heard the clang of the heavy iron door swinging open, they raised a howl of delight and rushed to the safe, which they found full of papers.

But, before they could do more than look at them, crack! went a pistol-shot, and Mr. Barlow clapped both hands to the seat of his pantaloons—what remained of them—and uttered a howl of pain and fear.

The next moment, bang! bang! went a gun at the open window and a shower of shot pattered in among the tramps, causing an instant

neous stampede. In the same instant, in at the window dashed a tall figure, upsetting the lamp, and followed by several more; there was the sound of fierce blows of sticks on heads, a scattering rush of bare feet in the passage; and then Mr. Oliver Calvert found himself sitting alone in the dark, paralyzed with fear.

The change from the lighted lamp to total darkness was so complete that for some minutes he could see nothing. He thought himself quite alone, but presently he heard the safe door clang-to, while some one was whispering over the numbers of the combination.

He listened and heard the key gently turned and withdrawn, when the same person brushed past him in the darkness and stole out into the passage, whence the distant noise of scuffling still proceeded, as if a fierce struggle were going on.

After awhile it died away, and he dared to get up and look about him. The house seemed to be deserted and silent; the burglars had vanished.

Quaking inwardly, he stole along the lower passage, then out on the piazza, and walked slowly and cautiously round the whole house, expecting every moment to see some dark figure make its appearance. But not a soul was to be seen, and he became satisfied that the robbers, whoever they were, had left the place.

Then his courage began to return to him, and he went into the house and began to explore it more thoroughly.

A light gleamed down the stairway, and when he mounted it he perceived that the glow came from Helen Chester's room, which he found illuminated by more than a dozen wax candles, burning tranquilly away.

In the middle of the room, bound hand and foot, lay poor Senator Calvert, his hard, painful breathing attesting the inconvenience, not to say torture, he was suffering; and when Oliver cut his bonds and raised him up, it was some minutes before he could do anything but gasp: "Thank Heaven! I was nearly gone!"

Oliver assisted him to rise and placed him on a lounge, brought him some water and rubbed his chafed wrists, till the old man presently asked: "How did it happen, Oliver? Did you get the men and beat them off?"

"Yes, sir, they're gone," was the unblushing answer. "I fear they've carried off the safe-key, but that's all."

"It won't do them any good without the combination, Oliver," whispered the old man, triumphantly. "I thought they'd have tortured it out of me at one time, but, thank Heaven, I stood it."

Then, as he looked round the room, he seemed to realize for the first time where he was, and anxiously asked:

"Where's Helen? Great Heavens, can those villains have harmed her?"

He was so much excited by the idea that he staggered up, holding Oliver's arm, went out into the passage, and began to call:

"Helen! Helen!"

His ward did not answer, but a voice from the room opposite exclaimed, in smothered tones:

"Oh, sir, please, sir, let us out. We're all choking in here."

The Senator unlocked the door, and was greeted by the pale faces of the frightened, half-dressed servants, who came flocking out, asking:

"Oh, sir, have they gone?"

"Yes, they're gone," replied the Senator, in a crusty way; "but, where's Miss Helen?"

"Oh, sir, I'm sure I don't know, sir," was the cook's reply, as spokeswoman. "Miss Helen she had her door locked, and we heard them bust it open, sir."

The judge staggered and clung to Oliver, shuddering and muttering:

"My God, is it possible? She must have been carried off."

Even while he spoke, they heard voices on the lawn, outside the house, and the trampling of boots on the piazza.

Then some one shouted up-stairs:

"Who's there? Is it you, judge? We've sent the varmints flyin', thanks to Miss Helen and the boy."

The party above hurried down to meet the gardener, whose voice they recognized, and found him, with the stable-boys, coachman and porter, at the foot of the stairs, when a hurried explanation was in order.

The gardener's story was, that he was roused from sleep by hearing a pistol-shot, and found Miss Helen shaking him by the shoulder to make him get up. That she had with her a boy, and told them that burglars were breaking into the house; whereupon he hurriedly got his gun and started down-stairs, where he met the other men armed with pitchforks and corn-cutters. That Miss Helen posted them, and presently they saw a crowd of men running by, whom they chased and scattered. That was all.

"And where's Miss Helen?" asked the old Senator, anxiously.

"She stayed behind with the boy, sir? Here she comes, now," was the reply.

Sure enough, a moment later Helen, in her own proper person, came in at the hall door,

dressed in a dark wrapper, with her hair still loose and disordered, but otherwise looking as calm as if she had just risen from breakfast.

"Helen, are you quite safe, child?" asked her guardian, anxiously.

"Quite, sir," was the rather frigid reply. "I found it was time I did something, if I didn't want the house to be plundered. Those wretches caught you; and as for cousin Oliver, he was nowhere."

"Why, child, Oliver beat them off at the risk of his life," exclaimed the Senator. "What do you mean? How did you know we were in danger?"

"Very easily, sir. My window was open; it was too hot to sleep; so I sat on the roof of the piazza looking into the garden. I saw a figure hiding in the shrubbery, and heard you talking about the stone he threw. Then I saw the tramps sneaking up to attack the house, and the boy who had warned you ran round to the back, climbed up one of the veranda posts and came to me. We had only time to get your gun when we heard them fighting with you on the piazza, and some one ran up-stairs and hid in the loft."

"But, Helen, I don't understand. Who is this boy you speak of?" asked the Senator, bewildered.

"Oh, he's one of the Calverton boys in my Sunday-school class," replied the lady, in an indifferent tone. "He happened to be near by when the tramps were plotting the burglary, and came to warn you, but got here too late."

"And where is he now?" asked the old gentleman, eagerly. "He must be properly rewarded."

"He's gone, sir," was the answer.

"Gone! Well, it can't be helped. What did you do together?"

"The boy took your gun and I my own little revolver, and we waited till they burst open my door. We frightened them off, and then, when they had gone, we slipped out, and he showed me how to climb down the post. So we got to the stable and woke up the men, just as we heard the shots at the house."

"Ah, yes, that was Oliver, I suppose," observed the Senator, in his innocence, at which Helen shot a rapid glance over to where Oliver stood biting the ends of his mustache, and said:

"Indeed! Was it?"

"It was lucky he was here," pursued the Senator. "He drove them off, all alone."

"Did he?" asked Helen, in the same dry tone.

"Not but what you did a very heroic act, Helen," pursued the old gentleman. "The fact is, I am proud of both my nephew and his cousin."

"Are you?" repeated Helen, more dryly than ever. "Very well, sir; then with your permission I think I will retire. I suppose you and Oliver are competent to do what is necessary now."

And without vouchsafing a single word to Oliver, who still stood there, chewing his mustache in silence, the haughty beauty swept up-stairs.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRAMPS' EXODUS.

NEXT morning an unusual stillness brooded over the grounds of Calverton Manor, for the inmates were tired out with their vigils of the previous night; but the country-side made up for it, soon after the butcher had made his usual morning call, by going wild over the "audacious attempt."

The news spread like wildfire before noon, and the Senator was overwhelmed with visitors to know if he was hurt, while the richer of his neighbors began to talk about getting up a "tramp-killing bee," as they called it, to drive the intruders from Calverton county.

Oliver Calvert had his share of the fame that had fallen on the Calvert mansion; for the Senator had got the idea firmly into his head that his nephew was a hero, and told everybody so without cessation, while the artless young man himself said not a word one way or the other, but allowed the impression to go abroad that he had really discomfited the robbers.

As for Helen Chester, she had suddenly become, from a very free-spoken young lady, remarkably reticent; evading all questions as to her conduct on the night before, and even refusing to answer her guardian as to the name of the boy who she said had saved the house.

She never spoke to Oliver, nor tried to interrupt his praises, when they were sung before her; but she looked at him in a strange way once or twice when they were momentarily alone, and he always avoided anything like an interview with her.

Lunch-time came and there were over a dozen strangers at that meal, in the course of which a boy arrived at full gallop from the town of Calverton, with a telegram for Oliver Calvert, marked "Immediate."

"Where's this from?" asked Oliver, in a hasty tone as he tore open the envelope; and all the table waited for the reply, for they knew Calvert was a railroad magnate of wealth and influence.

"Pittsburg, sir," was the reply.

Then there was a hush of expectation, for every one had heard of the railroad strikes in West Virginia; and their extension to Pittsburg had been predicted for some days.

Oliver read the telegram and handed it with a slight smile to his uncle.

"I think we've got them this time," he observed in a sort of general way to the whole table. "The men have struck at Pittsburg, ladies and gentlemen, and propose to stop all trains passing through till their demands are complied with."

"Dear me," exclaimed one lady, "isn't that terrible! Will they really do it, Mr. Calvert, think you?"

"They will, if the company lets them, madam," interposed the old Senator, whose eye had been kindling as he read the telegram; "but I judge they don't intend to do anything of the sort. Just listen to this."

As he spoke he smoothed out the folded paper and began to read aloud; the whole company, except Helen, listening eagerly. As for Miss Chester, she seemed perfectly indifferent to the whole thing, and sat playing with her fork and looking out of the window.

Then the Senator read out:

"HON. OLIVER CALVERT, Calverton, Pa.:

"Come on at once. Men struck an hour ago. Have wired Governor, and troops are on the way. Will be in to-night. Orders are to open road at all hazards and send to Washington for regulars if found to be necessary. All quiet yet. SHELBY."

"Take an answer back," said Oliver to the waiting messenger; and as he spoke he wrote rapidly for a few moments. "Would you like to hear what I say?" he asked; and there was a universal cry of assent, at which he smiled in his most superior manner, for he was not averse to posing as a hero.

"Here goes, then," he said, and read out:

"ERASTUS P. SHELBY, Superintendent Air Line Road, Pittsburg, Pa.:

"Tell Colonel Scott I'll be in by sunset. Get rations for the troops, and tell them to mow the rascals down like stubble. No quarter to Communists."

"OLIVER CALVERT."

The old Senator thumped the table, and several rich land-owners cheered the sentiment vigorously, as the railroad President folded up and sealed the telegram.

Helen Chester lifted her long lashes and cast a single scornful look on Oliver, which he caught, and under which he colored slightly, but she said nothing till the boy had gone, when she observed in her iciest tones:

"That telegram may cost you dear, if the strikers get the upper hand of the troops, cousin Oliver."

"Oh, but they won't," he replied, scornfully.

"Troops nowadays, with breechloaders, can afford to despise mobs. I'm glad the contest has come the way it has, for we shall just exterminate the mob spirit in our midst."

"It's a thousand pities we've not got a strong government like they have in Europe," said the Senator. "I'd like to see all these scoundrels blown from the mouths of cannon."

"They might turn the tables some day and perform that operation for the magnates of Calvert county," retorted Helen, who seemed to be in a contradictory mood, at which there was a general outburst of horror, and the Senator exclaimed:

"Helen, I do wish you would not utter such sentiments. We shall have you turning Communist next, I suppose."

"No fear of that, sir," she replied, in the same independent tone. "My father, rest his soul, left me property, so I have something to lose, and the motto of our modern society is, keep all you've got. But even Communists are not beasts to be shot down."

Oliver Calvert rose from the table with a profound bow to Helen, saying:

"I suppose that fling is meant for me, Miss Helen; but for my part I think they're worse than beasts, because much more dangerous. I'm sorry you don't approve of my course. Perhaps you'd like me to sit still and let the strikers stop all our trains and ruin the company. Much obliged. Meantime I must act as my judgment dictates, and leave your entertaining company. Farewell, Miss Chester. Uncle, will you drive to the station with me?"

So saying he retired from the room with the Senator, in a metaphorical blaze of glory, having quite extinguished Helen in the estimation of the company.

The lady herself took it very coolly, however, not deigning to notice the departure of her cousin; and the little company at lunch soon broke up, while the Senator and Oliver got into a buggy to drive down to Calverton Station.

No sooner had they gone and the house become quite clear of company, than Miss Chester threw off the absorbed and indifferent air she had hitherto worn:

Going to the piazza, she called up the coachman and told him to order up her horse "immediately; she was going for a ride."

"Oh, de Lord, Missy Helen," protested the old negro; "dat ain't safe nohow, and dem wicked tramps a-roamin' bout de country, seek-

in' whom dey may devour. Better let two ob de boys go wid ye, honey."

"I'm not afraid of all the tramps in Pennsylvania," retorted the girl, in a tone which showed she meant it. "I've wherewithal to make the worst of them as quiet as a lamb. Look here, Peter."

As she spoke, she put her hand into her pull-back skirt, and whipped out a nickel-plated, ivory-butted revolver, which had a dangerous look about it.

"There, Peter," she said. "You didn't know I'd been practicing with this little tool for the past six months. I can take the bull's-eye every time at ten paces. Hold out a penny, Peter, and I'll send it spinning out of your fingers."

"Much obliged, Missy Helen, but I'd rader not hold out no pennies," was the dry reply. "I'll bring up de boss, missy."

When Peter returned with the animal, a slight bay thoroughbred, he found Helen just coming out of the hall in a close brown habit, which seemed to afford no hiding-place for that little revolver, though Peter could hardly doubt it was there in some place or other.

The girl sprung to her seat from the horse-block; galloped gayly away down the avenue of beeches that led to the woods where their carriage had been assaulted the day before; and rode straight on to the very place where she knew the tramps had then made their camp.

It seemed a mad and reckless thing for any girl to do, and the peril might well have deterred many a man; but Helen Chester was one of those free, courageous girls of good health and strong nerves, who, having never known occasion for fear, are less prone to it than those who have been early cowed.

Into the woods she rode, as if she knew the place well (as indeed she did, for the tramps had made it a halting-place every summer) and straight toward the romantic spot known as the "Tramp's Paradise;" but no curling smoke nor moving figures met her eyes as she came into the opening, and it was with a little surprise that she found the place entirely deserted.

The ashes of dead fires, bones and feathers, half-burnt sticks, rags of all colors, a couple of crows, and the naked skeletons of the late Gipsy tents, such were the only remnants of the tramps' sojourn in Calverton Woods.

"They must have been frightened out after the failure of the robbery," said the girl to herself, half-aloud. "They did well to run away. But, where's my poor friend gone, I wonder?"

She rode slowly round the camp, carefully exploring every trace of the missing ones, and presently spied a paper stuck into the side of a tree with a long pin.

Riding toward it she pulled it off the pin, and found on it a singular scrawl, rudely traced in red paint of some kind. It bore some symbols unintelligible to her, mixed up with words in the following fashion.

Thus it ran:

Grubstip Enog yawa
Rummy peck no dor
Beak's caboose +
Grubstip Luffo Swag

Helen stared at this singular document in some amazement. She turned it upside down and pored over it, for several minutes, without succeeding in deciphering it, and finally left the camp with the still unsolved mystery in her hand.

She folded it up and rode slowly toward the town of Calverton, full of curiosity as to the meaning of this enigmatical paper, but unable to think of any way to interpret it.

That it pertained to the fraternity of tramps, and was probably a signal of some sort to those who might come after them to a well-known haunt, she felt certain; but, how to get at the facts she did not know till she had entered the town of Calverton, and saw before her the genial face of the old town constable, who had known her since she was a child. Then a thought struck her, and she rode up to him and showed him the paper, saying:

"Please, Mr. Davis, what does this mean? I found it in the tramps' camp, in our woods."

The old fellow took it and looked at it closely. Then he grinned as he gave it back to her.

"It's jest a signal to the tramps as comes arter them, Miss Helen," he said. "Part of it's back slang. That's what the English tramps does. There's some thieves' patter, but most of it's back slang."

"And what's back slang? What does the paper mean?" she asked, as much bewildered as ever.

"Back slang is jest spelling things backward: that's all, miss. I'll jest read the paper, and you'll see how easy 'tis. These hands in the corner, and the three bigger ones shows the camp's been moved. 'Enog yawa' is jest nothin' but 'gone away,' spelled back, and 'Grubstip' is Pittsburg. They ain't partikler to spell any better nor the law allows, miss."

"But, what in the world is the rest?" asked

Helen, after considering it to see if she could make anything of it. "What's *Rummy peck no dor*?"

The old man laughed heartily.

"That's flash talk, Miss Helen. It jest means 'Good grub on the road.' They ain't keerful to spell 'road' right."

Helen studied it again.

"What's *Beak's caboose*, and this mark?" she asked, finally.

"Guess that means your uncle's house, miss. He's a big-bug, what they calls a 'beak,' you know. That 'ere mark jest means N. G."

"N. G.," she repeated vaguely; for Helen was unused to slang.

"No good, miss. It's a warnin' to other tramps to keep clear of it, and I guess they will, arter last night. They say Judge Oliver jest laid 'em out, amazin'; and, I must say, I didn't think he had it in him."

Helen laughed.

"Never mind Oliver's heroics, Mr. Davis. I could tell you a story, but—"

The old man closed one eye and gave a sonorous:

"Hnnnnnnnn!"

"I think as much," he muttered, in a tone of confidence; "but, mum's the word, Miss Helen; I won't give it away."

"Then tell me what this last line means, Mr. Davis—*Grubstip Luffo Swag*. I understand Pittsburg, but what does *Luffo Swag* mean?"

"*Luffo* is jest 'full of' miss, and *swag*, every one knows, is plunder."

"Then the tramps have all gone to Pittsburg and expect to rob it," she observed, thoughtfully.

"So it seems, miss."

"Then cousin Oliver was right, and we shall be rid of them in these parts."

"P'raps, miss—if they don't come back worse'n ever."

"Why, what do you mean, Mr. Davis?"

The veteran constable came close to her horse and said, in a low tone:

"If I was you, Miss Helen, I'd take a little trip to Philadelfy or New York, soon's ye kin. There's goin' to be trouble in these parts of the liveliest kind."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that they've ordered out the malishy, and that the boys round here allows the strikers is right, miss. And I'm told they've sent for the Philadelfy boys to whip 'em; and if they tries it on, them city galoots is goin' to get handled kinder rough. I'll do my dooty, miss; but I must say I don't altogether hold with the way things is workin'. That's all, miss."

"Then you think there will be a riot and danger to us in the country?"

"I know it, miss. I hain't been town constable twenty-seven year for nothin. You has grit, so I tells yer what I thinks. You go to New York, miss."

The constable stepped back and gave a swift, apprehensive glance around him. Helen's eyes followed him, and she noticed that a group of poorly-dressed men, looking like workmen out of employment, were watching her furtively from the other side of the street.

Full of conflicting thoughts, she rode away homeward and found her guardian getting out of his buggy at the door of Calvert Manor, looking grave and anxious.

CHAPTER VIII.

COUNTRESS CACHUCA.

THE Pittsburg Opera House was crowded, despite the fact that it was the middle of summer and hot weather, to see the

"UNEQUALLED COMBINATON"

"OF—"

"*Stupendous Talent; Tragedy, Comedy and Ballet,*

"under the auspices of the renowned

"COUNTRESS CACHUCA, PREMIERE DANSEUSE TO

"His Majesty the King of Spain."

So the bills said; and, as is well known, play-bills can *always* be relied on to show a becoming modesty in announcing their attractions.

The Countess Cachuca had been heralded for several days by notices in the papers, hinting that she was a phenomenon of no mean order. Some said she was Lola Montes herself, come back to life; others her daughter; but all agreed that she was a prodigy of beauty and grace, who had broken the hearts of princes and dukes without number, and had refused proffers from crowned heads in Europe.

Mr. Orlando Romeo Stentor, the first tragedian of the "Cachuca Combination," was an old favorite in Pittsburg, where he had played *Macbeth* for many seasons; but the audience was evidently in no mood for tragedy; for their applause was faint in the dagger scene, and there was much stamping and pounding of canes when the curtain came down, though the management only gave one act of the play "among other attractions."

Then the orchestra—slender and local—began to discourse some mournful music in waltz time, through most of which the stamping continued, till the "ting!" of the prompter's bell brought a hush over the scene, and the curtain drew up amid perfect stillness, disclosing the familiar

old ruined castle by the banks of the Rhine, with moonlight effects on the water.

Now the audience settled back into their seats and fanned themselves in a vigorous manner, for they knew that the feature of the evening was at hand, the "Ballet-*Divertissement* of the QUEEN OF THE ZINGARI, or, THE GIPSY'S VENGEANCE, with the Countess Cachuca in the title rôle," according to the programme.

The orchestra in front played a few chords, pizzicato, "tum-TUM! tum-TUM!" and then ceased; while the chords were taken up by instruments behind the wings of the theater.

The music behind the scenes grew louder; some clear soft flutes or pipes joined in; and then, out into the moonlight stole a band of Gipsy girls, slender and graceful, dark-eyed and dark-haired, as unlike the traditional stage Gipsy as possible.

For once the show-bills had told the exact truth when they described the *corps de ballet* as being "belles of the Romany tribe, real unadulterated children of the wanderers." Even the rude countrymen who had flocked into the city to see the Countess Cachuca could realize that these girls were not of the common *figurante* order.

They were so lithe and graceful in every movement, gliding about like panthers, and their arms were so full and rounded, that they were evidently not professional ballet-girls.

Out they came on tiptoe into the moonlight, shaking their little tambourines at intervals to mark a cadence in the music, in a hushed, mysterious sort of way, as if they feared the clash of the little bells might disturb some one who was asleep near by.

Not a word was spoken, and yet the girls managed to convey this impression by look and gesture, as they stole out, looking apprehensively around, and at last filled the stage and commenced a sort of dance, in which the arms and bodies swayed to and fro, while there was little motion of the lower limbs.

They were beckoning to some one to come on, waving their tambourines, and every now and then giving a little click of the castanets, a stamp of the right foot and a soft clash of bells, as much as to say:

"Come on! What do you fear?"

A moment later, with a muffled patter of bare feet on the stage, came bounding in a band of lithe young fellows, with agile limbs, dark, fierce faces, and coal-black hair and eyes. They were all dressed alike, bare-legged and bare-footed, in gay scarlet and yellow jackets and trunks, with streaming sashes into which long knives were stuck.

All bore musical instruments of some sort, and the whole party instantly began a sort of coquettish dance, in which the men alternately advanced and retreated, while the women tried to provoke them to execute all sorts of athletic feats in time to the music. Some threw back somersets over their little lutes, playing all the while, others would leap on their neighbors' shoulders and stand there, playing, and every feat was rendered peculiarly graceful and daring by being executed in exact time; for these Gipsies seemed to have an intense feeling for rhythm and cadence.

In and out around the men wound the girls, waving their tambourines, and the music waxed faster and more seductive in its tones, as the male Gipsies grew more and more excited and emulous of each other, till there was a sudden clash of cymbals behind the wings, a shrill whistle, and out with a bound came the renowned Cachuca herself, in yellow satin and black lace, with a sparkling diadem on her head and castanets in her hands, giving one haughty stamp in the center of the stage, at which the Gipsies scattered in affright and vanished, leaving their queen alone.

There she stood motionless in the center, her great dark eyes looking with a sort of haughty fierceness into the parquet, every line of face and figure a defiant challenge to any person bold enough to refuse her worship, while a storm of applause shook the house, to which she returned not even the courtesy of a nod.

There was a sort of curl on her red lips, a haughty poise to her little head, that said as plainly as possible:

"You dare not say I am not a goddess. Down on your knees, all of you!"

Then, as the applause died away, one could hear the Gipsy music, as if softened by distance, playing the same languid, voluptuous Spanish airs to which the Zingari had just been dancing, and a smile stole over the features of the Gipsy queen, as if pleasant thoughts were visiting her.

A moment later, with a soft, gliding motion, she began to dance, and all the previous efforts of the Gipsy ballet were as nothing in comparison. The countess frequently seemed as if she had turned into a serpent, so lithe and sinuous were her motions, while at other times she executed the most marvelous bounds and pirouettes, accompanying the whole with a wild and expressive pantomime that spoke as plainly as words.

The Queen of the Zingari was in love and her lover had deserted her. There was rage, despair, determination for revenge, a deep-laid scheme by which she should accomplish it, and

then an indication that he was at hand, coming near to his fate.

With a stamp of her foot and a click of her castanets, she called on her people, and out they came to the clang of the cymbals, bounding and wreathing round the queen as if they implored pardon for having waked her by their unseemly merriment and were trying to propitiate her by their antics.

She waved her hand for them to be still, and then explained in pantomime what they were to do to please her.

A stranger was coming, a man big and strong, haughty and cruel, who had done her an injury. He must die.

There was a loud hiss among the Gipsies, and out flashed all the men's knives. There was no need to explain that pantomime.

But the queen waved them away. She must have him bound and a prisoner. No one but herself must kill him.

They put up their knives and produced cords with which to tie the victim. She nodded as if well pleased, and at that moment the cymbals clanged again.

Before the sound had ceased to vibrate the stage was cleared, and one might see the dark fierce faces of the Gipsies peeping from the wings, as the orchestra began to play again—a harsh, disagreeable air, full of discords.

Then into the middle of the stage walked a tall stout man, dressed in clerical black of the most modern cut, at sight of whom a murmur of surprise and amusement rose up from the whole of the audience, which speedily swelled to a little tumult, in which cries of "Calvert! Calvert! Oh, you old sinner!" were plainly to be heard.

The fact was that the actor, either by chance or design, had made himself up into the exact resemblance of so well known a person as Judge Calvert, President of the Air Line Railroad.

The people appreciated the humor of the thing, the more so that Judge Calvert had always borne a character of the most unimpeachable respectability, being a church-warden at St. Philip's Church, member of the Y. M. C. A. and a dozen other equally virtuous societies.

Public interest was centered on him, too, because it was known that he had just arrived in town, that all the employees of his road were on strike, and that he had publicly announced his determination not to yield an inch.

Finally, they knew he was in the house, for they could see him in the right-hand box close to the stage, with some dozen city magnates around him enjoying the ballet.

Pittsburg, on strike, and just before the riots, had nothing to do but kill time, and the theaters were full, spite of the hot weather. It was the lull before the storm.

The actor, who was personating the stranger so much like Calvert, quietly advanced in the pompous manner that always distinguished the railroad magnate, grounding a gold-headed cane at every second step with a decided swagger.

As soon as he reached the center of the stage he paused and looked around him, as if contemplating the house, in the course of which operation his eyes met those of his original, who sat staring at him with an expression of concentrated indignation.

Instead of wilting, the mimic judge cleared his throat in the same pompous manner familiar to all with his prototype, and stood swinging his cane to and fro, the picture of self-importance.

Presently out came one of the Gipsy girls, disguised as a beggar, and seemed to ask alms in dumb show of the mimic Calvert, who forthwith struck her with his cane and drove her away with a hectoring swagger.

As she was going out in seeming terror, in darted one of the Gipsies with a stout cudgel, before whom the mimic Calvert instantly quailed and retreated, while the Gipsy, flourishing his stick, compelled him in dumb show to go down on his knees to the beggar girl and offer his purse, at which the Gipsy laughed scornfully and kicked him.

This brought out a roar of laughter, in which the inmates of Calvert's box alone did not join, and the railroad magnate had the mortification of seeing himself caricatured before his eyes as a pompous bully and coward, while all the spectators enjoyed it immensely.

The way in which the joke was received satisfied him that he was not so popular as he had thought, which was indeed the case. Pittsburg, being a railway center, was largely under the influence of railroad men, who in 1877 almost universally sympathized with the strikers.

Calvert, being identified with the capitalists, was not popular, and the reception accorded to his double on the stage showed this.

After a short farcical scene, in which the Gipsies came in and danced round the unfortunate captive, beating him with sticks and buffeting him about, the Queen of the Zingari came bounding in and stood before her prisoner, who seemed to be struck with horror and remorse at the sight of her, for he fell on his knees and implored her pardon and his own

life in dumb show, to which she only replied by brandishing a dagger before him.

Finally he fell at her feet as if quite overcome by terror, and the ballet closed with a tableau entitled, "The Gipsy Queen's Revenge," as the bills styled it, as the lady stood with one little foot on her whilom lover's neck, while she flourished aloft a dagger, supposed to be dripping with his blood.

As the curtain fell there was a loud buzz over the theater, in which all thought of calling out the actors seemed to be lost. There was something so repulsive in the story of bald revenge, and so singular in the likeness of the actor on whom it was taken, that people were more interested in watching the real Calvert in the box than the mimic scene on the stage.

They all wanted to see how he behaved under it, and well did he take it to all appearance. His pale face had become set like marble from the moment the scene began its course, and he never took his eyes off till the curtain fell.

His companions in the box showed more feeling than he did, for they all scowled indignantly at the stage; but he only smiled, as disdainfully as he could, when Shelby, the Superintendent of the road, said emphatically:

"Well, Calvert, if you don't have those impudent strollers arrested for this, you are not the man I take you for. They ought to be lodged in jail at once."

"Let them go, Shelby," was the outwardly calm reply. "They know what they're about. We must wait till the strike's over. Then—we shall see."

But the indignant Shelby was not to be pacified, and the whole party finally determined they would go round to the stage door in a body.

CHAPTER IX.

BEHIND THE SCENES.

THE irruption of a party of strangers at the stage door of the opera house, while the performance was still on in front, produced, as Shelby had anticipated, a disturbance. The ballet was to be followed by the farce of "Poor Pillicoddy," and the stage carpenters were dressing the scene as rapidly as they could shift the flats, when a dozen of the solid men of Pittsburg, headed by the indignant Shelby, opened the stage-door, regardless of the doorkeeper's timid expostulations, ran up-stairs and came through the wings in a body, all talking together and flourishing their canes.

"Where's the insolent villain who insulted our party?" cried Shelby, and he was followed by Alderman Bullard, another solid man, who roared:

"Show us the scoundrel, and we'll give him all he wants."

Nobody answered their appeal, the stage carpenters going on with their work as if they didn't hear, and presently a little, mild-faced man with close-cropped light hair, a smooth face and general consumptive appearance, came up and observed blandly:

"It's against rules, gentlemen, for any one to be on the stage but the professionals. You'll have to go away. The manager is very strict."

"And who the devil is the manager?" thundered Alderman Bullard, red in the face. "Show him to us, and we'll let him know what it is to insult our friends."

"You'll find him in the box-office, gentlemen, counting the house," was the pacific reply. "Please to retire, for the curtain rings up in five minutes."

"Let her ring!" was Shelby's angry reply. "We don't stir off this stage till we've found somebody responsible for this outrage."

"You'll have to talk to the manager about it, gentlemen. I'm only the prompter," answered the little man, in the same quiet way. "If you won't go, I shall have to call up the Gipsies from the green-room, and they're a rough set. They'll put you out in a minute."

"Let them come!" replied the alderman, vauntingly. "I'd have you know, young man, that I'm one of the men that runs this city, and if I say this show can't go on, why it can't. That's all."

Here there was a stamping and clapping of hands in front of the curtain, and the prompter shrugged his shoulders.

"Very well, gentlemen, if I must, I must. Will you go or not?"

"No, sir, we shall not, till we've had satisfaction for this outrage on our esteemed friend, Judge Calvert," replied Shelby, firmly; and Aldermen Bullard, O'Mahoney, Schneider and Huggins all echoed the sentiment, while their heelers, to the number of eight, began to turn up their sleeves.

The aldermen had all belonged to the volunteer fire department, and were on their muscle; Shelby was a hard, resolute fellow, used to dealing with sullen men; and altogether they looked a dangerous crowd to tackle as they stood there in the middle of the stage, while the little prompter went off behind the wings.

Only Oliver Calvert began to feel nervous, for he whispered to Shelby:

"Hain't we better try the box-office first? Our action here is illegal, you know."

The superintendent shook his head and set his teeth firmly as he said:

"Don't you worry, Calvert. I ain't the man to let the company be insulted without taking it out of somebody's hide. They sha'n't hurt you, and it'll show those roosters in front that we ain't afraid of 'em."

Oliver said no more, for he knew that he had a reputation for determination, acquired through long habits of safe bullying; and he always felt like a different man with his friends round him.

A moment later, out came the little prompter, the incarnation of quiet resolution, just as a tumult in front of the curtain recommenced.

"Now, gentlemen," he said, "for the time, will you go out?"

"No!!!" roared Shelby, shaking his stick.

"Very well, then," was the reply.

The prompter turned to the back of the stage and called out in sharp, clear tones:

"Bounce the guys, cullies!"

In an instant the party was literally overwhelmed by a swarm of active Gipsies and stalwart carpenters, who dashed on them from front and rear, some out of the wings, others out of traps from below, or sliding down ropes from the flies.

Where a moment before were only two carpenters, hammering at a scene, now there were some forty men of all sizes, who clutched the invading magnates from all sides, wrenched away their canes, working together in perfect silence, and trundled them across the stage with more swiftness than dignity, to the head of the stage-door stairs, where they were pitched over, neck and crop, through the open door into a dirty alleyway of vile odor, when they heard the door bolted and barred behind them.

Then the Superintendent of the Air Line Road sat up on his broadest end, and looked around with a rueful countenance for his hat, while Alderman Bullard gave vent to his feelings with much fervor and force of language for about three minutes by the watch, during which the rest of the company silently repaired damages and picked up their hats.

Then they discovered for the first time that nobody was much hurt, but that Oliver Calvert was not among them.

Their clothes were ruined, for not a whole coat had survived the rough handling of the Gipsies; and buttons on vests and pantaloons had burst by the dozen, while hats were smashed out of recognition. But, beyond a few bruises, received in tumbling down-stairs, and a bleeding nose for the fighting alderman, no one was injured, though all their sticks had been taken by the enemy.

But Oliver was gone, and it was with a mortified countenance that Shelby exclaimed:

"Well, boys, this is a kind of a rough deal on us. I guess those roosters can do a little crowing about it. We'll have to talk sweet to 'em, to get Calvert out."

Here Alderman Bullard spit out a mouthful of blood and groaned:

"To think sich a durned crowd of painted jumpin'-jacks should ha' bounced us like that! We're disgraced, gentlemen. We'll have to git the boys in and lay them out, now, anyhow."

"Don't do nothing of the sort," was Shelby's earnest reply. "Let's go to the box-office and see the manager."

"But, where's Calvert? We can't leave our friend," objected Bullard, who was game to the backbone, with all his rowdyish manners.

"We can't get him by fighting—that's certain," was Shelby's sensible answer. "I'm as game as any man, but I'm not a fool. Let's go round to the box-office, and we can get friends there."

Bullard made no further objection, and the discomfited party, adjusting their clothes to present as respectable an appearance as possible, but looking decidedly disreputable for all that, went round to the front entrance of the theater, where the first person who met their gaze was Oliver Calvert himself, placid and unruffled in dress, but rather pale, standing in the lobby, in conversation with the lessee of the theater, a well-known Pittsburg man, called Colonel Brown.

The colonel, (cause of title unknown,) was evidently apologizing to the judge as they came up, and they heard his last words:

"I assure you, judge, I had no hand in this. The company are all perfect strangers to me, and they paid in advance for the theater. I'd no idea they intended to caricature you, and this is the first I've heard of it. I can't turn them out, but you can get an injunction on them as soon as you please."

"And do you see the way they've treated us?" asked Alderman Bullard, exhibiting his gory shirt front. "We went behind there, jest as civil as you please, and axed for the stage-manager, and they set on us with knives and pistols, and nigh killed us. I'm goin' to have them out of this shetbang afore ten minutes, if the boys has to raise the roof to do it."

The irate magnate was rushing into the theater, intent on vengeance, when Colonel Brown interposed:

"Now, alderman! Now, I say, alderman, listen to reason, a moment. It won't hurt those

Nemo, King of the Tramps.

people to smash my house, and that's all you'll do if you raise a riot. They don't own a stick here; it's all mine."

"Then why don't you bounce 'em?" asked Shelby, fiercely. "I would if I was you, and they'd insulted one of my friends. You ain't no good, Brown."

"But, my dear sir, they've paid their rent in advance," urged the colonel. "I can't bounce them. Besides, they haven't hurt Judge Calvert a bit. Look at him. Ask him."

"How did you get out, Calvert?" asked Shelby. "We were coming round to rescue you, and here you are, as cool as if you hadn't been touched."

"They didn't touch me," was Calvert's response, in a rather faltering voice. "The prompter took my arm and led me out, warning the rest not to hurt me; and he let me into the theater by an inside door. That's all. You needn't have been handled so roughly, if you'd taken his advice."

Alderman Bullard turned away to the door of the theater with a bitter scowl.

"Well, I swear," he muttered to his friend, O'Mahoney: "if I'd known he was such a tame, mean-spirited cuss as all that, darn my skin if I'd 'a' gone in there to help him. Why, he ain't got no more grit nor a rabbit."

And the alderman, in the plenitude of his disgust, spat on the steps with great vigor and force.

But Colonel Brown took the matter in a different light.

"You were quite right, judge," he said. "There's no use in fighting these variety people unless you do it the right way. I don't care what you do. I've got my rent, and that's all I'm after, you know. I don't want any show given in my place to offend any person in Pittsburgh. It hurts the reputation of the theater and that don't pay. You go to Judge Ebenezer—he ain't gone to bed yet—and clap an injunction on those fellows before they come on to-morrow night. That's the way to fix them."

"Good scheme," observed Shelby, in a thoughtful way. "Those roosters in front don't know anything of what's taking place; so keep a stiff mouth about it, boys, and let's get out of this."

"And without gettin' any satisfaction for this 'ere?" asked Alderman Bullard, indignantly, pointing to his ruined clothes.

"What satisfaction do you want, sir?" at this moment asked a voice behind him, and the whole party turned with a start, to see a tall man, with very heavy beard and long hair, who had just entered from the street, carrying a bundle of canes under his arm.

This tall man was dressed in a close blue frock and light trousers, wore a new silk hat and dogskin gloves, while there was about him the jaunty air of a professional sporting man, a character favored by his sparkling diamond ring.

"What satisfaction do you want, sir?" he repeated sternly to Bullard. "My name is Trevlac, and I am the advance agent of the Cachuca Combination. I have just learned that a party of Pittsburgh ruffians has made a brutal assault on our prompter, Mr. Graves. Do any of these canes belong to you, sir?"

Alderman Bullard was for a moment disconcerted at the tone of the stranger; but he answered promptly:

"Yes. That with the gold head."

"Take it then, sir," responded Mr. Trevlac, handing it to him.

Then he threw down the bundle on the floor and observed:

"Pick out your own, gentlemen. We don't want to commit anything so mean as petty larceny, and I judge these canes are worth about twenty-five cents apiece. Now then, you, sir, what do you want for satisfaction?"

He addressed Bullard as if picking him out for the most belligerent of the party, and the alderman justified the selection in a moment, by answering:

"If you're the rooster as runs that show in there, I want satisfaction for the way your bullies pitched onto us, ten to one. You've insulted our party, and I'm going to take it out of some one. Sail in, boys, and give this fellow all he wants."

So saying the doughty alderman raised the heavy ebony cane with a gold head that he had just received, and made a furious blow at the stranger, who carried a fine stick himself.

The tall stranger coolly parried the blow and leaped back into the street whither he was instantly pursued by the whole crowd, thinking they had a sure prey at last.

To their surprise, out of the darkness came leaping a score of rough men with sticks, at sight of whom all but Bullard paused.

The alderman, intent on vengeance, pressed on the stranger, who took all his assaults with exasperating coolness, and presently caught him a rap on the temple with the end of his stick, under which Bullard staggered back, dizzy and confused.

Then the stranger in turn advanced on him, made a rapid feint at the other's right side, which caused him to drop his stick to parry it, and the next moment, with a sharp blow on the

other side sent poor Bullard's stick flying in the air.

"Now, sir," he observed blandly, "I've given you satisfaction. Go home, or you'll get another thrashing such as you deserve."

CHAPTER X.

PITTSBURG BY NIGHT.

THE irate alderman was with some difficulty persuaded by his friends to abandon the field to the enemy, though he was ardently desirous of raising a riot in the theater, and so getting the help of "his crowd."

But the cooler heads of the party persuaded him that it was hardly the thing for a city magnate to breed a tumult, and Shelby observed:

"Oh, come along home, Bullard. We've got the worst of it this time, and there's trouble enough coming to-morrow, without borrowing it to-night. Wait till we get a fair chance."

So the alderman consented to be led away, vowing vengeance on "that tail rooster before I've done with him. You jest bet your sweet life on that, my covey."

The rough men who had come so suddenly to the help of the tall agent, did not offer to molest the party as they went away; but Oliver Calvert, who had lingered behind, went up close to the stranger and said, in a low tone:

"What have I done to injure you? Why do you persecute me?"

The stranger looked at him for a moment, and then observed, blandly:

"My dear sir, who's persecuting you? We have no intention of persecuting any one, I assure you."

"Then why do you turn me into ridicule before all these people?" asked Oliver, still lower.

"Oh, you mean the ballet. It's curious we should have a fellow so like you in the company, isn't it? That was the cuntes's idea, that make-up. It seemed to take with the people."

Oliver Calvert flushed up at the placid impertinence of the other, and answered, bitterly: "You may not find it such a joke, to-morrow. As for that painted—"

"Hush!" interrupted the tall man, in a deep voice of singular sweetness, and laying one powerful hand on his shoulder. "You should be the last to reproach her for anything, Oliver Calvert. Go home and look to your own safety, for bad times are coming."

For some reason or other, Oliver did not make any answer. He stood looking into the dark orbs of the other as if he were fascinated, and when the tall stranger turned away, the rich railroad President left the theater as quietly as if treading on eggs, and went to his hotel in thoughtful mood.

It was a very hot night, and as he passed through the streets he came across more than one group of men lying out on the sidewalk, apparently seeking coolness not to be found in the houses.

He gave them no particular notice till the phenomenon became so frequent that he began to look at them, and then he saw that they were almost all in rags and barefooted. They did not belong in the houses, for these were generally shut up close, spite of the heat, and he realized that they must be tramps.

This gave him no particular concern, for he had predicted an irruption of tramps into the city in expectation of strike riots, but he nevertheless hurried his pace, for some of the recumbent men were looking up at him as if they wanted to summon resolution enough to waylay him, and he was unarmed.

He could not help seeing that the inhabitants of Pittsburgh felt some fear of these tramps, on account of the close way in which they had shut up their houses; and not a single policeman was visible on the street as he went along, till he got to the hotel, where they were clustered in groups, as if awaiting orders.

He asked the clerk at the hotel what they were doing there, and the man answered, with a smile:

"I'm afraid you're the cause of that, Mr. Calvert, along with Colonel Scott and Jay Gould and the rest of you."

"What do you mean?" asked Oliver.

"Simply that the chief of police has had to draw all his men in near the depot to protect the property of the road, in case there's any attack on it."

"But they won't attack it," said Oliver, a little contemptuously.

"Perhaps not, sir. Here's some letters and telegrams for you," returned the clerk, constrainedly, and he handed the bundle to Oliver, who sat down in the reading-room and began to con them over.

He had come in that morning to meet his colleagues of the road, expecting to find the men rioting; but to his surprise he found all things so peaceful that the only symptom of a strike was the unwonted silence in the repair shops and yards of the junction.

Trains were running as usual, and there seemed to be no cause for alarm, the strikers being merely the hands in the machine shops, and there being no urgent need of them for a day or two. He had become so much at ease with the situation that, as we have seen, he had

found time to go to the theater along with the Superintendent of the road.

The sight of the tramps lying about the streets, the concentration of the police around the depot had begun to create uneasiness in him now. His company was only one of several which operated in Pittsburgh Junction, and he did not know what the heavier capitalists that represented the large roads had done since he left the hotel.

The first note in his bundle was a pencil scrawl, dated an hour before, from the Pitt House, in the handwriting of a brother railroad magnate:

"DEAR CALVERT: We have news that the trackmen, engineers and brakemen will strike to-morrow morning and stop the trains. Come over and see us here at once."

Then there was a telegram from Philadelphia from his uncle:

"Seen the adjutant-general. Troops are all ready to go at a moment's notice. Helen is here with me. Thought it safest. May come on myself if troops come. Keep up spirits. HARVEY CALVERT."

The next was another pencil note from the Pitt House, saying that the Directors were going to hold a special meeting in the morning. Would he attend it at 9 A. M.?

The last in the batch besides newspapers was a soiled, dirty envelope directed in red ink:

"HON. O. CALVERT,
"Brooks House,
"Pittsburg."

He opened it listlessly and found a scrawl without signature. It ran thus:

"You think yure safe. You never was in more danger. The boys is bound to win. If sojers comes, we kin whip sojers, for we've smelt powder ourselves. ARMY OF POTOMAC."

This note made Oliver feel quite sober and thoughtful as he went over to the Pitt House, where he found quite a grave assemblage in the room of the magnate who had written him the note.

"Is that you, Calvert? Where have you been?" asked the heaviest owner in the place, Colonel Magnus.

Calvert told him and gave a short account of how the people at the theater had caricatured him and how the streets were full of tramps sleeping on the sidewalks.

"Yes," said Magnus, gravely; "and they're likely to stay there, now the hot weather's come, till they're driven out, which they're not very likely to be. Have you heard the news?"

"What news?"

"About the trackmen striking?"

"Only from your note."

"We had a deputation in from them not an hour ago, very civil and quite respectful, but firm. They say they want an advance of ten per cent., or no more trains go through till they get it."

"But they won't stop the mails, will they?"

"Oh, no. They know better than that, for that would render them liable to the U. S. laws. They propose to let through the mail-car alone, and stop everything else."

"And they begin to-morrow morning," said Mr. Plutus, another magnate.

"And how are they to do this?" asked Calvert.

"By the rule of force I suppose."

"And what are we to do, or rather what have you done?"

"Telegraphed the adjutant-general. The Governor's away, off in the West somewhere, on a trip. He says we shall have troops, a whole division, by noon."

"Good," said several members, in tones of satisfaction.

"A division? That's near ten thousand men, ain't it, colonel?" asked another director. "How everlastingly we will give it to those fellers if they try to stop the trains."

Colonel Magnus shook his head gravely.

"That's not the trouble. We must get men to take their places, and the road will be out of order, no one knows how long. It will be a clear loss of I don't know how many thousands of dollars to all of us, even if they don't destroy a single thing."

"Then the best thing we can do, Magnus," observed Oliver Calvert, who never felt so brave as when in a room surrounded by other rich men, "is to nip this thing in the bud."

"How?" asked Magnus.

"Why you see, the trouble in the other places is that they've tried to go on with their business slowly, persuading the strikers, till the troops come up, thus losing three or four days anyway."

"Well, that's unavoidable. It's the penalty we have to pay for keeping our property safe."

"I don't believe in it. I believe in mowing the rascals down, as I said in my telegram to you."

"But how are we going to mow them down?"

"Why you've got troops and police here now, haven't you?"

"Yes, but we can't depend on them. There are two regiments of country militia, and more than half of them are relatives of the strikers. So with the police. We can't trust them."

"They'd act with the rest if some trusty troops set them the example, wouldn't they?"

"Yes, but where are the troops? The adju-

tant-general thinks he can depend on his militia, and he won't ask for the regulars."

"Well, there's the Philadelphia boys."

Magnus smiled a sort of painful smile as he asked:

"Do you know how many men they've got in that division?"

"I don't know; five thousand at least."

The old railroad man counted on his fingers.

"There's a major-general and staff, two brigadiers and staffs, two colonels and staffs, about a dozen majors and staffs, six bands, and less than six hundred men all told."

Oliver's face and those of the whole party lengthened perceptibly.

"That's not much."

"It's not enough, and I've sent to Washington to ask for help. If we get that we're all right. I'd sooner have one company of regulars than all we've got."

"Why?" asked Mr. Plutus. "Are they such terrible fighters, the regulars?"

Magnus grinned humorously.

"Not exactly that; but they represent the nation, and these fellows all think of Fort Sumter, and hesitate to touch a regular."

"Well," said Oliver Calvert, decidedly, "I've made up my mind. Either we must mow the rascals down, or we must give in to them."

"To-morrow will tell which," observed Magnus. "Meantime, Calvert, I suppose you're aware that there's a good deal of feeling against you personally here."

Oliver turned pale.

"Me? Why? What?"

"About that telegram of yours on 'mowing the rascals down.' The papers all had it out this morning with some comments not very flattering to you, and I'd advise you to keep among the rest of us here to-morrow. You're not safe at the Brooks House. I wonder you were not attacked to-night."

"Some men did look at me pretty hard," observed Oliver, falteringly; "but no one told me that—"

"You were in danger. Well, you are. If once the mob gets up, and we don't really mow the rascals down, you'll be sorry you ever said those words, if they catch you. Come, I'm going to bed. It's the last sleep I expect to get for some days."

And the cynical old financier went off, leaving Oliver Calvert dumb with amazement and beginning to wish he was anywhere safe out of Pittsburg.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CALM BEFORE.

BUT little sleep visited the eyes of Oliver Calvert that night. The cynical warning of Colonel Magnus, to the effect that he was in danger on account of his telegram to "mow the rascals down," had filled him with apprehensions on his own account, and he did not dare to go back to the Brooks House.

He stayed where he was, in the same hotel with the other railway managers, and sent a porter secretly for his baggage, registering himself under the assumed name of Mr. Smith, so as to elude inquiry.

Long before sunrise, as soon as the first streaks of dawn showed over the smoky city of Pittsburg, he was up and looking out of his window, which afforded a view into the railroad junction, depôt and round-house, car-shops and engine-houses, soon to become so notorious.

Then he was surprised to hear a low hum rising from below, and to see all the space around the hotel black with people, hiding the gleaming lines of rails and surging to and fro around the depôt.

He had taken a room high up near the roof, in the vague idea that so he should best escape notice, and was too far off to hear more than the hum; but it gave him a sense of vague disquiet.

It was not yet five o'clock, and he knew that none but freight trains were likely to be stirring at that time of morning, but he heard the hiss of escaping steam from a number of locomotives, and, looking over the roof of the depôt to divine the cause, saw that the track was blocked for a considerable distance with freight-cars that had arrived in the night. On both sides of the depôt and on all the switches, trains of cars were standing, and only one line in the center was left open, save for the crowd of people.

Presently he heard, far away in the west, the whistle of an approaching train, and it was answered by a hoarse shout from the people below, who began to run toward the depôt. Then he recollected that the night express from Chicago was due there at five o'clock, and began to wonder whether it would get through.

He could see the white wreaths of smoke far away beyond the cutting, coming nearer and nearer, and heard the engineer sounding his whistle again and again, as if he saw obstructions on the track.

High up as he was on the ninth story of a lofty hotel, he had a fine view all round him for miles; the whole city being spread out below him, with the surrounding country to the river-banks and beyond.

He saw the white smoke of the approaching train coming nearer and nearer, the engineer uttering his hoarse notes of warning and slackening his speed as he came; but there seemed to be no positive impediment to its passage, and at last it rumbled in under the glass roof of the station, an engine with nine cars behind it.

It was an ominous sign to him that it was received with a great roar of triumph, and that the track on the other side of the depôt remained as full of people as ever.

While he was looking, he could hear a great tumult going on inside the depôt, repeated rounds of cheers and yells, followed by intervals of silence, as if some one was addressing the crowd, which applauded the speech.

Then the light increased, as the sun rose through a lurid mist of fog and smoke, presaging a hot day, and he heard another whistle from the east, announcing the coming of the New York express, due ten minutes after the other.

This time the yelling and hooting below rose to a perfect tempest, and the black crowd ran surging along the track in the new direction, where the whistles became loud and frequent.

But he noticed that this time the narrow line of track in the middle was left open, as if the crowd wished to entice the on-comers to enter it, and so provoke a collision of the two trains.

Five minutes later, the eastern train came rumbling along the track with seven cars behind it, the engineer whistling and ringing as hard as he could, every note answered by defiant yells from the crowd, till he came to a full stop in front of the depôt.

Then Oliver Calvert saw what the crowd were at.

Hardly had the engine stopped when it was boarded by a throng of men; he saw the engineer and fireman come down from their places and fraternize with the men around them, showing that they had joined the strike; and then he heard a rap at his door, with the voice of Shelby, saying:

"Get up, Calvert; the strike's begun, and you're wanted."

He opened his door quickly, for he had not undressed himself all night, and found the Superintendent of the Air Line Road looking grave and troubled.

"The whole city seems to be into this thing, and we shan't get through without a fight," Shelby said, hurriedly. "There are two regiments of those country louts lying on the hill behind the depôt, and they've stacked their arms and don't seem disposed to do a thing to help us. The strikers are in with them, and they've been getting drunk together all night."

"What are we to do?" asked Oliver, with a pale face. "I wish we were out of this, Shelby."

"Not worse than I do," replied the Superintendent. "It's only a matter of salary with me, but you've got all your property locked up in this strike. If I was a Director I'd vote to raise the men's wages, and so get out of the scrape."

"We can't, Shelby," protested Oliver. "We're not making ten per cent. on our capital as it is. No; that's out of the question. If I were only safe in Philadelphia, I'd let the thing go. The State is liable for any damage these fellows do us."

"But, we ain't in Philadelphia, and it's my belief we couldn't get out of here if we tried," was Shelby's cross answer. "I wish I hadn't given that telegram to the papers, yesterday."

"What telegram?" asked Oliver, paler than ever.

"Why, yours about 'mowing the rascals down.' It caused a great deal of feeling. You'll have to keep among the rest of us to-day, and alter your dress. If they were to see you outside, and recognize you, there'd be the devil to pay."

"What on earth made you give that message to the papers?" asked Calvert, falteringly.

"It wasn't my fault. All the boys were bent on fighting yesterday, and your telegram chimed in with them exactly. But the papers set them off on the other tack, and now you hear these cursed Pittsburgers talking strike everywhere."

"And what am I to do?" asked Oliver, beginning to shake.

"You're to come along with us, and we'll try to get you off in a hack on some country road. Then we'll set them all after you on another road and try to draw off as many as we can that way."

"But they might catch me," was the natural objection.

"Well, if you don't like to try that plan, you'll have to stay with us and run the risk of being recognized. They've had spies in here already, looking over the register, and they're hunting you up in every hotel in the city."

Oliver Calvert was not a very brave man, as we know, but there was enough in this intelligence to appall him, had he been a hero. Mob violence is like Indian tortures, a terrible instrument of death, and the vast crowds of people round the hotel cut off all hope of escape for one of Oliver's remarkable personal appearance.

Silently, and revolving in his mind all sorts

of schemes of escape, Calvert went down to meet his partners in misfortune, who received him with that coldness which meets any man who contributes toward the common danger.

Every one of these railway men in conversation had expressed the same sentiments as Oliver, but none of them had allowed themselves to get into print on the subject, and all were ready to repudiate him, now that the danger had become great.

They said nothing to him on the subject directly, but he felt that they were not in sympathy with him, for he was spoken rudely to by more than one.

Colonel Magnus, who stood by the open window looking down into the crowd, was short and snappish with every one. They had had a telegraphic instrument set in the corner of the room which they proposed to make their headquarters during the troubles, and the "click! click!" of the sounder was going on all the time, while the Directors were talking in low tones.

Every now and then the crowd below would give a cheer, and the sound of loud talking and coarse laughter showed that the strikers were in good spirits.

Presently they heard the loud "Tchh! Tchh! Tchh!" of the engine before the depôt, in motion, followed by cheers from the crowd; and Mr. Plutus observed:

"They're going to let 'em through, after all!"

Then they crowded into the window and saw the eastern train steam slowly into the depôt.

But Mr. Plutus was soon undeceived as to the cause of yielding.

Several voices shouted from below, as the well-known figures of the railway magnates appeared in the window.

"Three groans for the tyrants of Pittsburg!"

These were given with fearful vigor and earnestness, and another called:

"We'll let the mail-car through, but not a darned wheel besides."

And, sure enough, very soon after, the eastern train, shorn of all but a single car, went back to New York, while the Chicago train was dispatched in a similar way, the two having exchanged mail bags.

Presently a delegation of strikers was announced to see Colonel Magnus, and Oliver Calvert, who had been trying to eat a mouthful of breakfast with but little appetite, hastily walked into an inner room, whence he could see without being seen.

Then into the room came a party of grave, decent-looking men, all dressed in their Sunday clothes, and were met by Colonel Magnus, who demanded:

"Well, boys, what is it? Do you come to propose a compromise?"

"No, sir," answered the spokesman, a veteran track-walker who had been in the employ of the road for some twenty years. "The boys sent us up to know whether you're ready to advance our wages, that's all."

"We can't do it," was the firm reply. "We're not making money as it is. We'd sooner close up the road."

"Then the road'll be closed up, cunnel," answered the veteran, dryly. "For the boys has struck hands that no trains goes over it till the bosses comes to our terms. Times is hard, we know; but we've got to live, and we can't do it since the last cut-down. We might as well die fighting as lie down and starve."

"You can die any way you please," retorted Magnus; "but you can't get blood out of a stone. We can't and won't raise the wages. Now look here, Sweeney, you boys are not acting wisely. We're bound to beat you in the end, and if we do, any man that joined in the strike will be sorry for it. I don't mind paying something handsome to each of you fellows if he'll talk reason to the rest. You shan't lose by it, any one of you, but we can't come to your terms, and you might as well know it first as last."

He made his offer of bribery very adroitly, and knowing the necessities of every man in the delegation; but old Sweeney shook his head.

"Couldn't do it, cunnel. The boys has made up their minds. What shall we say to 'em? That you refuse?"

"Tell them we can't do it, Sweeney, but that if they'll go to work now nothing shall be said about what has happened."

"All right, cunnel. We'll be in again every hour to ax if you've changed your mind; but no trains don't pass except the mail cars; that's settled."

The delegation left the room, and the managers looked at each other with troubled faces.

Just at this moment the operator at the instrument handed in a telegram to Magnus, who hurriedly perused it with a look of relief.

"Word from the adjutant-general; he says the troops have left Harrisburg and Philadelphia at one time, and will be here by ten o'clock. If the strikers don't yield before that, we shall have to clear the track at all hazards."

The great railway men in conclave looked at each other with pale faces and beating hearts. It was a new thing for most of them to have anything to do with violence, and they naturally dreaded the shedding of blood.

Oliver Calvert, who had come out of the inner room, and had been stung into aggressiveness by the sneers of his colleagues, bitterly observed at this juncture:

"You may find it necessary to mow the rascals down after all, Magnus, despite the horror you profess for it."

Magnus flushed a little.

"There's a time to talk and another to shut up. If I have any mowing to do I don't talk about it or write to the papers; I just do it. You haven't, as far as I know, done any yet."

"Wait till the troops come," was Oliver's vaunting answer. "I'd have you know I'm one of the Governor's staff, Colonel Magnus, and able to do my duty if need be."

"Then you'd better put on your uniform and go out to join the troops when they come in," retorted Magnus. "You'll be safer there."

Oliver started and smiled.

"By Jove, you're right. I never thought of it. I'll do it, and some of you handy gentlemen may be glad to see our boys in blue, when we drive these ruffians away from here."

Magnus made no reply, and Oliver went up to his room to get out his uniform, for he thought to himself that it might be the most effectual disguise he could have. In common with a great many other gentlemen of ample means he had long possessed the rank of colonel and aide-de-camp to the Governor of the State, with the privilege of putting on the most gorgeous of uniforms when he wished, and ordering about militiamen, with the most infinitesimal amount of actual duty to perform.

Now, he thought to himself, this would give him the opportunity of getting in among the troops, and once there he would feel comparatively safe.

CHAPTER XII.

OLIVER'S ESCAPE.

On his way up to his room Oliver passed one of the black waiters in a dark passage, slipped a half-dollar in his hand, and told him to come up with him. The man eagerly followed him, and by close questioning Calvert learned the position of affairs in the city.

Pittsburg seemed to be as quiet or quieter than usual—the man said—except around the railroad, where the crowd had gathered for about a mile on either side the depôt, and seemed to be idly awaiting the march of events.

The stores were open as usual all through the city, except near the depôt; but nobody was doing much business, and the streets were comparatively deserted.

He learned that there was a livery stable at the back of the hotel, opening on a very narrow street, and that this led into the quietest part of the city.

"Can you get me a buggy and fast horse with a driver, and can you take me in by any back way, so that I am not recognized?" was Oliver's next question.

The man, who evidently knew him, winked and replied in a tone of familiar confidence:

"I can, if I's paid for it, boss. I don't want to risk a beating for any man for nothing, and if they find us out they'll want to climb right over us."

"I'll give you ten dollars when I'm safe in the buggy," responded Oliver, eagerly.

"It's worth fifty, Mr. Calvert," was the unexpected reply. "They've got spies all through the hotel where you wouldn't expect 'em. They'd spot you in a moment."

"I'll give you fifty," was the answer, and the waiter briskly said:

"All right, boss. I can trust the word of a gentleman, but you'll have to put on a wig and beard."

"Where can you get one?" asked the railroad President.

"There's a theatrical gent in the next room—him as is agent for the Cachuca Combination, boss—he'll lend one to save a gentleman like you from being tore to pieces."

Oliver turned deadly pale.

"In the next room? That man? Then he's betrayed me, or will."

"Not a bit on it, boss. Mr. Trevlac, he's a real gentleman, he is, and there ain't nothen mean about him. He ain't up yet, and ain't likely to be till ten. These theatrical folks is dreadful lazy in the morning."

"Don't say a word to him on any account," urged Oliver, hastily. "I wouldn't trust him. He's an old enemy of mine."

The man stared and shrugged.

"Very well, boss. I's do the best I can."

So saying, he left the room, and Oliver hurriedly assumed his uniform, put on a pair of linen trousers and a duster over it, to hide it; assumed a revolver under the duster; wrapped his sword along with an umbrella; put a forage cap in his pocket and a soft hat on his head; and thus armed and disguised at the same time, waited anxiously for the return of the waiter.

It was a good half hour before that worthy tapped at the door, and he looked pleased and mysterious.

"It's all right," he whispered. "I's get you down the servants' stairs and I no one won't never be no wiser. Say, boss, they's going on awful about you in front."

"What do you mean?" faltered Oliver, who felt all his terrors come back.

"Some of the hands think they seen you in the Directors' parlor, and they've had a committee in to search. They're shouting: 'Bring out Calvert! Hang the mower!'"

The big, powerful man trembled like an aspen at the news, and the waiter continued, encouragingly:

"Don't be scared, boss. They sha'n't hurt ye. Come along with me and you're all right."

He led Calvert out in silence into the dark passage, and just then the door of the next room opened, and out stepped the tall agent of the Cachuca Combination, as bland and well dressed as ever, his shining wealth of black hair and beard carefully oiled and scented.

"Ah, Judge Calvert, happy to see you," he began, in the most matter-of-fact way. "I saw you registering last night, and was glad to hear you roomed next to me. How does the strike progress, sir? I fear it will hurt our business to-night, but we poor devils on the road are used to misfortunes. I hope you don't bear malice over our little joke last night, sir?"

"No, no," answered Oliver, in a low voice, and very hurriedly. "The only favor you can do me now is not to mention to any one you've seen me."

"Aha!" observed the stranger. "So they're after you for that 'mow down the rascals' business, are they? Very imprudent, Mr. Calvert. Very. Never brag beforehand. It's not safe. Going to join the troops?"

Oliver began to sweat. He had suspected this man to be an enemy of his, though he could not place him; but he had seen him under circumstances that left no doubt in his mind on the subject.

"For God's sake," he muttered, desperately, "don't betray me. I don't know that I've ever injured you—"

"Indeed," retorted the other, in a peculiar tone. "Mr. Calvert has a very treacherous memory, methinks. When we meet again, I may find means to refresh it. Meantime a pleasant and safe journey to you."

He nodded carelessly, brushed by the astounded waiter, and sauntered off, whistling; while Oliver, in a tumult of conflicting emotions, followed his conductor down the servants' staircase to the stables, and thence into the reeking alley behind them, where he found the buggy.

The alleyway in which these stables were situated was closed toward the depôt, and they could only hear the shouts of the mob very faintly on the other side of the buildings that barred the way. The opening of the alley was toward the part of the city where little business was done, and not a soul was to be seen passing across it.

The buggy was a strong, country-made vehicle, with a handsome, rakish-looking nag, and a dark-faced man on the box, whose keen black eyes and curly dark hair gave him a foreign appearance.

"Is this the man that's to take me out?" asked Oliver, of the waiter, a little apprehensively; for he noticed that the driver did not so much as look at him, but kept staring out between his horses' ears.

"Yes, boss, that's the man, knows all the roads in the country," answered the waiter, glibly, holding out his hand for the promised bill. "Best be lively, boss; they might be coming round here, you know."

This was enough to hasten Oliver, who slipped the promised reward into the negro's hand, climbed into the buggy and said to the man:

"Where are you going to take me?"

"Where you want to go?" was the counter question, with a peculiar rapid intonation, but in a soft, melodious voice.

"Out to the eastern line and to the next station to meet the Philadelphia train," answered Calvert. "Don't drive near the track till we're out of town; but get me there, quick."

"I'll take the Rye as quick as the Gri can jaw," was the reply, which Oliver did not understand, and then the dark man laid the whip on the horse's back and went off at a rapid pace, shooting down one of the main streets of Pittsburg and passing within a block or two of the crowd that still lined the track.

At first they did not seem to attract much attention, but a shout followed them as they dashed across one of the side streets, and they could hear it caught up along the track, so that it opened fiercely on them as they came to the next street, where a crowd of tramps came running up toward them.

Oliver began to feel the old flutter at his heart, and the dark man laid the whip sharply on the horse, which broke into a gallop and dashed on faster than before.

At the next turning the crowd was much closer to them, showing that the alarm was being passed on, and at the third street they saw a streaming mass of people within fifty feet of the road on which they were, while groups were making their appearance in front.

Oliver realized that they would soon be cut off at this rate, and began to fumble nervously

"Gentleman, as quick as the horse can go." Gipsy words mixed with English.

for his pistol, when the driver wheeled sharply to the right and dashed away off up the opposite street, leaving the crowd behind him.

Several stones flew after them, of which one struck the back of the buggy, and Oliver heard for the first time the shout of which they had told him:

"Calvert! Calvert! Hang the mower!"

The hoarse furious accents in which the cry was uttered told of the exasperation of the mob, and made the fleeing millionaire shiver with terror, but the dark driver's face showed no sign of fear, save that he set his teeth close and gave the horse one or two sharp cuts.

The animal, thus excited, was now galloping wildly away, and soon left the crowd behind him, so that at the next crossing they were able to resume their original direction, and after half an hour's hard driving had left all traces of the rioters behind, and were bowling along a country road, the horse white with foam; but still going gamely.

Then the dark driver pulled up to a walk; let the reins fall on the dashboard, and carefully wiped his face with a handkerchief, observing:

"The Rye's safe. We can walk."

Then Calvert for the first time began to wonder at his talk.

"Why do you call me a Rye?" he asked. "What language is that?"

"Romany," was the laconic reply. "Ma hi atraish, fear not; Peter Griengro won't leave the Rye."

Oliver was still more puzzled, for he had never been much of a reader.

"Romany?" he repeated. "I never heard of that language. Where do you come from, and what's your name?"

"I am Peter Griengro, what the house-dwellers call Peter the Jockey. My people come from the East, and will go back there some day."

"And what do the house-dwellers call your people?" asked Oliver, a little suspiciously.

"Gipsies," was the reply, and in the very utterance Oliver gave a violent start and hastily exclaimed:

"Then doesn't this buggy belong to the livery stable, Peter?"

Peter Griengro stroked the back of his horse with the end of his whip, and smiled proudly.

"I never drive other men's gries, brother. The Romanichal are all griengros born."

"Then what induced you to help me out of this trouble?" asked the railway magnate, still more astounded.

"Boro Rai Nemo told me to take the Rye to his friends, and bid him stay there," answered Peter Griengro, still staring at his horse's head, and, as the animal had cooled by this time, they began to jog along again.

But Oliver had become silent and thoughtful, and it was not till they had passed over another mile that he observed, inquiringly:

"This Boro Rai Nemo is the one they call the King of the Tramps; isn't he?"

"The house-dwellers call him so, brother," replied Peter Griengro; "but, to us he is Boro Rai Romanichal, what you call King of the Gipsies."

"And he saved me?" asked Calvert, in the same thoughtful tone.

"He told me to hitch up, brother, and take you along, because all the gajos in the ker gries-lero were atraish. I mean all the fellows in the stable were afraid to take you away, for fear of the dasto, the crowd outside. And the Boro Rai told me to take care of you with my life, brother. No one must kill you while I live."

Calvert was completely puzzled. Who this King of the Tramps was, he could not, for the life of him, tell, though it was evident that the stranger understood much about his own past life that he did not wish to be generally known.

But he had not seen the familiar form of King Nemo in Pittsburg, and wondered how he got there.

"Where is King Nemo?" he asked Peter Griengro, suddenly. "I didn't see him anywhere."

"The Boro Rai is everywhere," was Peter's evasive reply. "Yonder is the station, brother, but the train has not come there yet."

They were somewhere about six miles from Pittsburg by this time, and could see before them, at the end of the dusty road, the little white cottage station, where Oliver had intended to stop and await the coming of the troops.

It was entirely deserted, and, as they drove up to the door, they saw that it was closed up. The people inside had probably joined the strike.

Oliver hastily dismounted, tried all the doors, and finally smashed in a window and effected his entrance that way, when he went straight to the telegraph office.

He understood the Morse alphabet well enough, and strongly suspected that messages must be going along the line by this time.

Sure enough, the sounder was clicking away at a furious rate in the deserted office, and a long strip of paper was hanging to the register, covered with the dots and dashes of the unheeded messages.

He could catch the words as they came over the sounder, and they soon assumed sense and form.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MILITIA.

"—DICKENS are you? Why don't you answer?" clicked the sounder.

"General wants to know what mob doing? Troops be there ten minutes. Is it safe go town?"

Here it stopped, and Oliver put his finger on the knob of the Philadelphia bell, which soon brought a response from the operator.

"Who's there?" asked Oliver, clicking off the question on the sounder.

"General —," naming the chief of staff.

"Who are you?"

Oliver gave his name, and proceeded to click off a short account of the riots, ending in a request to stop the troops at his station, so he could go on with them.

The signal "all right" soon came back, and the Philadelphia man proceeded to inform him that his uncle, Senator Calvert, had come on with the troops by special request, as it was thought his influence might be useful to avert trouble.

Even while this message was coming over the wires, he heard the distant snorting of the approaching troop train, and hurriedly tore off his duster and made his appearance in full dress.

Unbolting all the doors, and bursting open those he could not otherwise unlock, he soon had the station ready, and looked around for Mr. Peter Griengro; but the Gipsy had driven away; and he could see him, far off on the road to Pittsburgh, going at a brisk pace.

"To tell the rioters how the troops are coming," thought Calvert, as he watched him. "Strange how he should have been sent to help me, when he evidently belongs to the other party."

But his reflections were cut short by the near snorting of the train, which would be likely to pass the station unless he signaled it, so he pulled out the red flag from its receptacle and ran out into the road, waving it violently.

As he had expected, it was the troop train, which drew up in front of the station; and much amazed and encouraged were the militia to see Oliver out there in full uniform. When they found who he was, he was surrounded by a flock of major and brigadier-generals, who almost shook his hand off, congratulating him on having done:

"A dented plucky thing, sir, to come out all alone in uniform, with those ruffians howling after you."

Then one of the major-generals, a young man in gorgeous raiment, with the yellowest of sashes, asked:

"How far can we go on this road, colonel, before it's blocked?"

"Not more than a few miles. We'd better halt near the city and march down the track."

"Very good advice."

And the young major-general, with another who was elderly, began to tell him how they had determined to "stand no nonsense."

"The men have got forty rounds apiece, and by Jove we'll use them all up on these scoundrels but what we'll keep the road running," said the elder major-general, while two brigadiers chimed in:

"Those West Virginia greenhorns let the mob ride right over them, but we'll show them a thing or two—eh, colonel? They've not seen our crack troops yet."

Then the colonel of one gorgeously-attired regiment, which numbered fifty officers and about a hundred and fifty privates, began to tell how his boys had taken the palm from all the regiments at the Centennial, and how he'd show these New York fellows how Philadelphia boys could clear out any country mob that ever showed its face.

Oliver looked around him at the gorgeous uniforms and glittering rifles of his friends, and his courage began to rise to fever-heat. They looked so trim and soldierly, these smart citizen soldiers, that he never doubted they would clear out all the crowd in Pittsburgh.

Then he heard his own name called, and saw the handsome white head of old Senator Calvert looking out of the car window.

He hurried up to salute his old relative, and found the Senator smiling and eager, for he cried out:

"Well, Oliver, my boy, I think we've got the scoundrels this time. How did you get out here?"

"Come on to welcome you in, sir," was the affectedly careless reply. "We've had a hard time; for those country regiments are no good. They just look on and let the mob stop the trains. I had quite a little brush to get out here; stones flying, and all that sort of thing, you know."

"You always were rash, Oliver," said the old gentleman, admiringly. "Don't expose yourself too much to-day, my boy."

"I won't, sir, unless it's absolutely necessary," answered Oliver, in his most consequential tones. "But I must do my duty, you know. My commission compels that. Where did you leave Helen, sir?"

"Safe in Philadelphia at her aunt Mary's. Well, when are we going to move on?"

"At once, sir."

And here the engineer began to ring his bell, and the soldiers flocked into the cars, which soon moved away toward Pittsburgh, the engine and tender full of generals, watching the track ahead and discussing "the thrashing they were going to give the mob."

The only thoughtful person in the crowd was Oliver Calvert; but then he had seen the mob, and the nearer he drew to the city the more he began to regret that he had come.

The influence of vanity and *esprit de corps* were as strong with him as with many others, and held him up to his work as long as he was surrounded by the generals, but he felt a fluttering at his heart as the smoke of the city came in sight and black dots became visible on the track ahead.

These dots became more and more numerous every moment, and resolved themselves into crowds of people lining the road; but the closest scrutiny with a field-glass failed to reveal any obstacle laid on the track as they had reason to expect.

The train ran on at a low rate of speed, and the engineer blew his whistle frequently to warn people off.

The warning was obeyed; but the officers in front, having a clear view, noticed that the idlers closed in again as soon as the train had passed, and came running after the rear cars, while the sounds of ironical cheering and yelling from those in front and at the sides increased every moment.

At last, on the outskirts of the city, the crowd became so dense on the road ahead that even the doughty major-generals thought it advisable to stop the train and disembark their men, which they did amid many tokens of dislike from the crowd, who began to shout all sorts of offensive epithets at them.

The strikers did not, however, offer to molest them, as they formed into a column, facing out on all sides, and marched along the track, with a company of dismounted cavalry in front.

By this time all the generals had stopped bragging and become unusually silent, as they walked along in a group in the center of the column, with the common soldiers, whose lives were not counted of so much value, outside, next to the mob.

Oliver behaved better than might have been expected. His present position was, at any rate, preferable to that of a few hours ago; for he was no longer alone and defenseless.

Moreover, he had one great source of vigor beside him, in the person of his venerable uncle, who had disembarked with the troops, and now strode along, erect and dauntless, the incarnation of pluck, his white hair and beard looking grand under a broad Panama hat, while he was buttoned up in precise black, spite of the heat of the day.

This old gentleman, who had never smelt powder in his life, looked more like a soldier than any man there, and Oliver did not dare to disgrace himself before him.

They marched along the track toward the depot, which they could see looming up before them, about a quarter of a mile off; and, as they advanced, the crowd became more and more dense.

The ironical shouts and cheers swelled into a perfect roar all round them, and they began to realize that there were at least twenty thousand people in the vicinity, men, women and children; some hostile, some derisive, some curious, but no one friendly to this handful of strangers from Philadelphia.

The column looked like a small boat in an angry sea as it moved on, the men getting pale and excited, the officers talking to them in low tones. The gallant militiamen were beginning to get frightened, and with good reason, for they had found more than they bargained for when they left Philadelphia.

They had expected to confront a mob of railway men, unarmed and ready to stampede; instead of this they had found an angry city, that evidently looked on them as foes, despicable but impertinent.

Before they had gone fifty yards, the young major-general gave the order to load the rifles.

Oliver passed it along one side of the line, and there came an ominous clicking of breech-loaders, as the men slipped in their cartridges.

There was something in that clicking, sharp and metallic as it was, that pierced through all the roar of the crowd, and produced a momentary hush.

The mob had been edging in closer to the troops on the flanks up to that time, in a dense mass of humanity, those behind pushing on those in front. Now it recoiled for a space, and the little column resumed its march.

The soldiers pressed on for a hundred yards more, till they came to a deep cutting, black with people; and here the trouble was renewed.

Men on the front of the crowd were shoved forward from behind, and there was a great pushing and jostling, with affectation of laughter and remonstrance against the pushing, but with the result of gradually bringing crowd and soldiers nearer together.

"Don't fire, we can't help it."

"Stop that shovin' behind."

"Sojer, would ye work? No, I'd rather sell me shirt."

"Ah, look at the Philadelfy thieves, comin' to rob honest men of their bread."

"Rush 'em, boys!"

"Snatch the guns from 'em, and give 'em what they want!"

Such were the cries that began to echo round them, each more menacing than its predecessor; and Oliver Calvert, who was near the front company, thought he saw symptoms of a rush coming and quivered all over.

Then he shouted out in desperation the fatal order:

"Fire on them, men! Mow the rascals down!"

Up went carbine and musket, and the yells of the crowd were drowned in a roar of fire-firing. Pittsburgh riots had begun.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE STORM BEGINS.

From the moment Oliver spoke, there was a confused fire from all sides of the little square of militia, rolling and rattling on without cessation for several minutes, men and officers wild with excitement and eager to avenge the insults they had endured.

As for the crowd, the effect of the fire was terrible at short range in that closely-packed mass of humanity. A few pistol-shots and stones were returned, but the great mass of the people scattered and fled in the wildest confusion, the women shrieking, men cursing, children crying with terror, while the groans and screams of the wounded of all ages and sexes, strewn over the side of the cutting, were horrible to hear.

More than a hundred were killed and wounded by the first fire that fired; and by the time the generals, rushing around, had managed to stop the slaughter, the whole of the track and cutting were strewn with dead bodies and wounded people crying for help.

Then followed a dead silence, only broken by the groans of the unhappy wretches shot down, and the little column of men took up their march toward the depot over an empty track.

The major-generals began to breathe again, and Oliver Calvert was proud at the apparent success of his policy.

"I told you it was the only way," he said. "Mow the rascals down, and the rest will run every time. We've settled them for good, and now we'll go on to the Pitt House and get the cars running again. Won't Colonel Magnus be glad to see us?"

But no one made him any answer.

They had to all appearance won a victory; for the crowd scattered before them as they came, and hung irresolute, about two hundred yards off, a low murmur being the only sign of life visible.

But on the track itself the stillness became intense, and one could hear the voices of the officers saying, in low tones:

"Close up, there! Close up! Catch the step, boys! Left! left!"

They spoke as if they were afraid to hear the sound of their own voices.

They had begun to realize that even unresisted slaughter has its drawbacks as an amusement.

Every now and then the men had to open out to avoid stepping on a dead body, or heard the voice of a wounded man praying for water.

Oliver Calvert started and uttered a nervous cry at one place. He had almost stepped on the dead body of a little child.

There it lay, a tiny thing not four years old, dirty-faced and curly-headed, its little brown legs hanging limp over a rail in the track, its blue eyes wide open and staring blindly up at the sun, the gray pallor of death gathering over the infant face.

A red, ragged hole in its breast, a dark pool slowly trickling on the ground at one side, showed how it had met its death, and the soldiers passed it with averted faces.

After they saw that, the officers said less than ever; Oliver became silent, and Senator Calvert began to get pale and sick.

The next was the body of a great brutal-looking tramp, who still clutched in his stiffening hands a rusty horse-pistol. He had possibly deserved his fate; but the men could not get out of their heads the pinched face of the little child, and one of them muttered:

"Poor fellow!"

A moment later came a scream of apprehension from almost under their feet, and there lay a young girl, her hair falling over her face, the blood streaming from one bare arm as she nursed it with the other.

"Don't trample on me, please," moaned the poor creature. "I'm shot in two places, gentlemen. Don't kill me, for God's sake."

They told her as gently as they could not to fear, and one of the generals said:

"You ought not to have been out in this crowd, my girl. See what you've got by it."

But she only moaned out:

"I couldn't help it. I was only looking on. Oh, how shall I ever get home?"

Then, as they passed on, the young major-general observed:

"This is bad, Calvert. I didn't think they had women and children in that crowd."

But Oliver, who had been trying to harden himself, replied:

"It can't be helped. They'd have killed us if we hadn't done it."

They went on to the front of the depot, where they began to hear shouts and cries in the distance, and presently "*clang! clang!*" went a number of large bells all over the city.

The generals began to look round them in an apprehensive way, and the clanging became louder and more incessant, while the shouts and cries came nearer and nearer.

But the crowd, which had fallen back in dismay after that first volley, still hung in the distance in a great circle, and they could see that the bodies down the track were being carried away.

Oliver looked up at the Pitt House in hopes of seeing Colonel Magnus and his friends; but the balcony in front of their room was empty, and there were no signs of people in the room.

Being now in front of the house, he passed through the ranks and went into the office and lobby down-stairs.

Both were entirely empty. Not a waiter was to be seen; the clerks had fled, and the guests with them.

As with the Pitt House, so with the rest in the vicinity. Every one had fled, and the militia had the place to themselves.

They had won a victory and looked for welcome, but found instead a silent isolation that was ominous of the future.

But this silence was not to last long. They hardly expected it.

The bells kept on clanging, and the shouting had extended to the crowd in the neighborhood, which still hemmed them in, at a respectful distance.

Presently it swelled into a roar of triumph, and "*bang! bang! bang!*" went three muskets from the bare hill at one side of the depot, where stood the Round House, soon to become so mournfully memorable.

A cry of pain from one of the soldiers showed that the shot had told, and Calvert exclaimed:

"They've broken open the arms-shops. We shall have to give them another thrashing."

Hardly had he spoken, when from all quarters opened a lively dropping fire, the puffs of smoke among the crowd showing that the rioters had secured arms in quantity.

The beleaguered militiamen, not waiting for orders, returned the fire, and the old major-general began to look nervous again. He was the senior officer present, and had the nominal responsibility of everything. The country regiments that had been lying idly on the hill all the morning were supposed to be a part of his command.

Presently, in a pause of the firing, one of the brigadiers came to Oliver and said in a low tone:

"Colonel, I'm afraid we're sold. Those country regiments have joined the rioters and they're firing State ammunition at us. Look there."

He handed Calvert a field-glass, and the other could see, here and there among the crowd, the crossbelts of militiamen, with more than one military cap, though the wearers had generally thrown away their uniform coats.

Then Oliver began to feel a sort of sickly sensation rising into his throat, and he muttered hoarsely:

"What shall we do?"

The young brigadier, who seemed to be a plucky fellow, answered:

"We'll have to charge them and drive the brutes off. We've done it once, and can do it again."

Oliver handed back the glass and made no reply. He began to see that fighting was a risky business, even in the case of militia against mobs.

He sauntered over with affected coolness to where the two major-generals stood, conversing in low tones and looking grave; and one of them said to him:

"Colonel, what do you suppose has become of all these railway men, whose property we came to protect?"

"I don't know, general. It's the puzzling part of the whole business," Calvert was forced to admit.

Senator Calvert, who had been growing accustomed to the tumult round him, had now quite recovered the use of his nerves, and was as firm as ever.

"I think," he observed, in his most bitter tones, "that the gentlemen are afraid and have run away. That's all. If I were in command here I should make a maneuver of some sort."

"But what maneuver would you make, Senator?" asked the older general, desperately. "I'm quite open to advice. I only wish some one else was in command here. What would you advise?"

"Not being a military man, I don't care to give advice," retorted the Senator. "But you ought to make a maneuver of some sort. We shall all be killed, if we stand here to be shot."

The Senator's ideas of maneuvers were hazy;

but he saw that something was wrong, for three or four men had already been hit.

The young general interposed with a new notion.

"It's no use leaving the men here all exposed, general. Let's charge the crowd over by the round-house; get inside and fortify ourselves. We don't seem to have any friends here, and we want a place to put our wounded."

The old general eagerly accepted the advice; for he was at his wits' end what to do; and Oliver seconded the endeavors of the chiefs so zealously that the men were soon formed into compact lines and moving steadily forward on the round-house.

The crowd in front, seeing them coming, scattered before them, but the crowd behind set up a yell of triumph and came charging after them, firing as rapidly as their arms permitted.

Then the soldiers got excited again, and began to run, firing as they went; and thus it was something very like an armed mob in uniform that finally dashed up the hill, rushed into the round-house and slammed to the great doors behind them, leaving the greater mob outside howling for their blood, and firing useless shots at brick walls and iron doors.

The justice of the young general's advice was shown by the fact that their assailants ceased to persecute them as soon as they entered the round-house.

The building was a great brick barn or storehouse for the reception of dilapidated cars, and had plenty of small windows about five feet from the ground, from whence the soldiers could fire in safety at their exposed foes.

The crowd seemed to realize this as soon as the beleaguered men from Philadelphia; for very soon there was not a man to be seen within gun-shot, and all attempts to annoy the militiamen ceased for several hours, till the shades of dusk slowly descended over the city.

But the men who had come that morning from Philadelphia, with only an early and light breakfast; most of them with no haversacks, and none of them with more than a single meal in their stomachs, began to look gloomy and despondent at their situation, and the officers were not a whit behind them in grumbling.

One or two began to talk about surrendering and going back; and only the energetic behavior of the younger general prevented a spread of this idea.

He made a speech in which he reminded them that they had no mercy to hope from the mob if they gave up their arms, and that if they stayed where they were, they must soon have help from the regulars and the rest of the State troops, who were ordered up.

Then he called for volunteers to go out as soon as it was dark and see the city authorities, with a view to getting rations for the famishing men.

Two of the negro water-carriers, who had come along from Philadelphia, volunteered to go; and the question arose how to get them out, unobserved, with a letter. While they were in the midst of a discussion on the subject, darkness closed in, and very soon after the bright blaze of a bonfire glared through the windows, while a hot fire of musketry opened on the round-house, under which the glass windows went all to smash.

Presently came two loud reports close by, and a couple of round shot came crashing through the brick walls, strewing the debris over the appalled soldiers.

The rioters had procured *artillery!*

Then Oliver turned pale in good earnest, as he had a right to, for it seemed as if night and danger had come together, and the cry went up from the beleaguered men:

"Where's the general? He's run away!"

Then the younger general came to Oliver with a face of great anger and disgust, saying:

"The old coward had citizen's clothes on under his uniform. He's left us to our fate, and escaped."

"Bang! Crash!"

Another shot tore through the round-house as he spoke.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SIEGE.

MR. BILLY BARLOW, the Boss of the Bummers, stood on the top of the bare hill near the round-house, with a smoking musket in his hand.

Jim the Faker was near him, and all the colony of tramps that a few days before had taken up their abode in the "Wanderer's Home" at Calverton, were scattered about in the crowd, most of them carrying weapons in their hands.

Besides the tramps, there were a number of rough-looking men in their shirt-sleeves, who talked of the strike in a way that showed they were personally interested; and it was easy to see that these were railroad men, from their cut, determined way of speech and their energetic manner of acting.

These were mostly hard-working fellows, with families, used to the rapid rush of railway life, quick and prompt at expedients and ac-

customed to see obstacles disappear before them.

Some of them had lost friends, relatives, children, in that unhappy collision of the morning; and these seemed especially determined on revenge. For the time being they fraternized with the tramps, who had flocked into town, secreting the plunder; and all seemed ready to fight side by side to avenge the slaughter of the morning.

It was a strange crowd that had gathered on that Pittsburg hill that sultry night. Besides the tramps and railroaders, there was a large number of young and old men, some respectably, others shabbily dressed, men of all callings and trades, citizens of Pittsburg, for the time being bitter foes of the beleaguered militiamen. Local pride, that most sensitive of foibles, had been roused in them and carefully fanned by railroaders and tramps, who saw their advantage in it.

The very regiments of militia that had been called out first to suppress the riots had for the time being practically disbanded, and one might see plenty of uniforms scattered here and there among the mob.

A small knot of men with bare arms was gathered round two six-pounder brass guns that had belonged to a local militia battery, and were now turned against the city troops in the round-house.

"Well, cullies," cried Billy Barlow, vauntingly, "guess we've got them city roosters where we want 'em at last. Them's the Milledy fighters that was a-goin' to clean out us boys from the country like shavin's. Oh, yes. Think I see 'em."

"They was blowin' so loud you couldn't hear yourself," was the comment of a grizzly machinist, all black with powder smoke. "See how yer like *that*, my covies."

And he discharged a State rifle at one of the round-house windows as he spoke.

"We'll have the wall down in two or three more licks," cried Jim the Faker, exultingly, as the men round the cannon began to sponge out for another round.

"Get ready to rush in, boys," said a veteran railroad man at this juncture, coming round, gun in hand. "When the wall comes down we've got 'em."

"Kill every durned rooster in the crowd," cried Billy Barlow, savagely. "Remember the gals they shot to-day."

He could have said nothing better calculated to inflame the passions of the crowd; for the bitterness of feeling over the morning's slaughter was intense.

Uttering savage cries, the rioters opened a hot fire upon the round-house, and the men at the cannon got their pieces loaded and pointed, cursing all the while.

The light of a huge bonfire, made of lumber hastily torn from the sheds that abounded round the company's yards, gave ample light to see the round-house, while the surrounding obscurity afforded cover for those of the crowd who had been kept at a distance during the day.

All this while nothing had been heard from the defenders of the round-house, who had ceased shooting in the afternoon as soon as they found their fire was not returned.

Now, all on a sudden, just as the rioters were preparing to send them a third round from the artillery, a spitting fusillade came from one of the windows, and down went several of the volunteer gunners, wounded or killed, while a loud cheer burst from the imprisoned militiamen.

"Blast their picters!" growled Billy Barlow, vindictively. "We'll pay 'em for that, presently. Go it, boys!"

As he spoke, out ran several men from the railroaders to take the place of the disabled gunners, who had not yet fixed the friction tubes in their places.

The new volunteers had picked up and were trying to insert the tubes, when the rifles of the besieged once more spoke out, and the new men dropped, while a shower of bullets came hissing into the midst of Billy Barlow's companions, who forthwith scattered and fled over the crest of the hill.

The railroad men were the last to go, and not without one more trial at firing their guns; but again the deadly aim of the imprisoned men cut down the adventurers.

Then came a lull in the battle, while the ring-leaders of the mob hastily consulted together what was to be done to drive out the enemy.

"They don't act like they did in the morning," observed Jim the Faker, thoughtfully. "Look like they'd had some help from the other side. Can a cove get in there?"

"Yes," said one of the railroaders, a watchman of the company. "There's a small door back out into the lumber yard over there. Maybe the cove has gone in that way."

"No cove won't join *these* cullies," said Billy Barlow, scornfully. "They think too much of their skins; they don't. All they've got is a damn leader. Wish we had one. King Nemo's the man, if he was here. What a head that man's got, eh?"

"I'd bet on Spunky Jack to be just as good if he was here," retorted Jim the Faker. "I

boy had the most grit of any little feller ever I seen, and he was as quick with his pistol as greased lightnin'."

"Who's seen King Nemo sence we've been in Grubstip?" asked another tramp. "I hain't seen hide nor hair of either on 'em; and the cussed Gipsies ain't been nigh us."

"What do they care about the rights of man?" asked Billy Barlow, indignantly. "Them Gipsies ain't got no fight in 'em."

"When did they leave you?" asked one of the railroad men who overheard the dispute. "There's a lot of Gipsies a-dancin' and singin' at the Opera House, as might be yourn."

Billy Barlow seemed surprised and asked him, whereupon the man told him how he had been at the theater the night before, and all about the caricaturing of Oliver Calvert.

Jim the Fakir shook his head. "That can't be our crowd. They didn't have no Countess Cachuca with 'em. Besides, they wouldn't leave King Nemo, and didn't have no money."

"How d'yer know that?" asked Billy Barlow, contemptuously. "They allers had a morn't of waggins and hosses, and was a-jabberin' their Gipsy lingo, that no Christian kin understand. For all you know, they might be the same cusses we knowed. They went ahead of us on the road."

Here conversation was broken off by the approach of a buggy, driving down the side street and up over the open ground on which they were, followed by a crowd of people cheering.

The buggy contained a lady and a man, and they could see by the light of the bonfire that the lady was very beautiful and handsomely dressed, while the gentleman was a man of great size, with long black hair and beard.

"Cachuca! Cachuca! Three cheers for the queen of the stage!" shouted one enthusiastic youth, who had recognized the fascinating dancer, and the enthusiasm spread among citizens of all grades as the lady drove by, bowing and smiling, while she scattered little hand-bills.

"The Countess will play as usual to-night, gentlemen all," cried out the tall man, in a powerful voice. "We don't intend to let this little business disturb us, and if any of you feel inclined for a rest after the day's work, follow us. Three cheers for the Pittsburg boys!"

The cheers were given with a will, and the buggy drove boldly on over the hill in full view of the round-house as if defiant of danger, followed by a dense crowd of people.

Not a shot came from the imprisoned militiamen, who seemed only anxious to be let alone, and the triumphant procession crossed the track and passed on through the streets of Pittsburg, where the crowd seemed as great as usual, now that the night had come.

The gas was lighted; shops were open, people were talking to each other, the hotels were full, and no one would have suspected that a few hundred yards away a tragedy was in course of enactment, of which the end was not yet.

The prevailing sentiment among the people of Pittsburg seemed to be anger against the Philadelphians for a wanton slaughter, and satisfaction that they were likely to get their deserts for it. The sound of the firing had died away; and if an occasional dropping shot was heard, it was drowned in the roar of the street.

Mr. Trevlac, as the waiter had called Countess Cachuca's tall agent, kept his keen eyes constantly roaming about him, and observed to his companion in a low tone as they passed the Pitt House:

"The railway kings have fled the city, Jacko; not before it was time."

The lady addressed by this singular name smiled disdainfully.

"They were pretty fellows to try and be kings. Calvert is a fair specimen of them, I suppose."

"Not entirely. He had less daring and prudence than some others. They saw it was no use stemming the tide, so they quietly faded away. He thought he'd be safer in uniform, and now he's shut up in the round-house with the other fools."

"Are you sure of that?" she asked, earnestly.

"I don't want him killed, you know—"

"Singular!" he observed, dryly. "You don't want any one but yourself to kill him, I suppose you mean."

"I mean nothing of the sort. I mean that he must live to do justice to all he has wronged."

Mr. Trevlac stroked his black beard and gave a slight impatient groan.

"Forever dreaming, Jacko," he said. "Let bygones be bygones. You will never accomplish it. You failed in your first attempt, and that was sane and lucid compared with this mad scheme. But here we are at the theater. We shall have a full house."

"Heaven grant it!" she exclaimed, fervently. "We need money—much money—to deal with that villain; but we'll triumph yet; see if we don't."

He jumped out and lifted her from the buggy at the entrance of the stage-door alley, and then drove slowly away to the Pitt House, where he found Peter Griengro at the stables,

waiting to take the horse which had saved Oliver Calvert's life that morning.

The Gipsy saluted him respectfully. Harvey stepped out, saying:

"Sureshen, Peter?" (How are you?)

"Kashto devas, boro rai," (Good-evening, great lord), answered Peter, with a low bow, and he took the horse away and was going to the stable, when Trevlac asked:

"Have you been over to see the fighting, Peter?"

"Avo, boro rai." (Yes, great lord.)

"And who gets the best of it?"

"The yang-engre. (fire-fellows or railway men) have driven the kurum-engre (soldiers—fighting-men) into the boro-ker (big house) and jah te kashiaf leenge (go to burn them)," was the polyglot answer of the Gipsy jockey.

"What do you mean, Peter?" asked Trevlac in Romany, and Peter told him how he had been over among the rioters since dark, and that they were preparing to set the lumber yard on fire to burn out the soldiers, as they could no longer fire the cannons. He further said that he had peeped into the round-house himself, and could see the whole interior through a chink in the masonry. He had seen the Rye he had rescued in the morning, inside, in uniform, looking much dejected, and talking to an old man in black, the only one not in soldier clothes.

"And what was this one like?" asked the agent. "Did he look like a policeman or a railway man?"

"No. He was a Rye; a gentleman," answered Peter, earnestly; "and his hair was like snow, and he wore a long beard, and was dressed all in black with a broad white hat, and carried a cane with a gold top that bore an eagle's head with jewels for eyes. Such a cane Peter had never seen before."

Trevlac had listened to his account with evident perturbation, and when the Gipsy had finished he asked in rapid, excited fashion:

"Is it the same man that had the house robbed by the perdas?" (tramps.)

"Avo," (yes) answered Peter, laconically.

"Then come with me, Peter," the tall agent cried, hurriedly, grasping the Gipsy's arm. "We must get him out of that or he'll be killed. Call all the Romanichal, Peter, for we have work at hand."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ROUND-HOUSE.

MEANTIME the defenders of the round-house felt very gloomy and despondent. The defection of the old major-general, who had slipped out, no one knew when, through the lumber-yard, leaving his uniform behind him, had been a great discouragement, for they had trusted to his local knowledge to get them out of their troubles at the last extremity.

The command thus fell to the young Philadelphian general, who had in his favor youth and energy, and who speedily silenced the cannon, as we have seen, by the use of his best marksmen.

But after the rioters had been driven from their artillery, keen anxiety still remained. The besiegers had drawn out of the firelight, but they were still hanging round the building in the circle of darkness, and no one knew how near they were.

Every now and then they found out to their cost when some incautious exposure of a party before a window in the glare of the bonfire brought down a fusillade from a corner previously dark and quiet.

Still, on the whole, a decided lull had come in the conflict, and nothing but a confused hum told of the operations of the rioters.

Once a vehement burst of cheering caused them to run to the side next the bonfire, and they saw the crowd rush over the hill and go streaming down to the track, following a buggy, in which was seated a lady and gentleman.

At first the men were for firing at them, but the officers were able to restrain them, for the object of the movement did not seem to be personally hostile to them.

"What a handsome fellow that is," observed the young major-general, for the glare of the bonfire was full on the tall form and magnificent beard of the Cachuca Combination's agent. "I wonder who he is, and who that lady is, too? She must have lots of pluck to sit there so cool."

One of the men near them saluted in the free and easy militia style, and answered:

"Guess I know, general. I've seen the lady before, but not the man. She's a variety actress, and they call her the Countess Cachuca. I've seen her dance in Louisville, Cincinnati, all over in fact."

This militiaman was by trade a commercial traveler, and had come up from Philadelphia in the dull season with the militia company to which he belonged.

"Oh, that accounts for it," said his chief, rather admiringly. "It's a little advertising dodge, I suppose. That man must be her agent, and a smart fellow too. He'll draw a good house to-night. What do you think of that, Senator?"

Senator Calvert, who had been watching the passage of the buggy with quiet curiosity, nodded absently.

"Very smart trick," he answered. "I wonder where I've seen that woman before? Her figure looked familiar."

"Hope you've not been running to variety balls, Senator," maliciously suggested the "drummer."

The old gentleman favored him with a look that silenced him; for Senator Calvert had as imposing a presence as could be found anywhere, and then turned to Oliver, who had not said a word during the talk.

He had in fact recognized both the buggy and its occupants, and had been revolving in his mind all the strange circumstances surrounding the day just over.

"Oliver," said the Senator, "did you ever see that woman before?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply, uttered as if surprised out of the speaker. "That is—once—last night. I was at the theater, and she danced with a lot of Gipsies. I believe she's a Gipsy herself. That's all I know of her, sir."

He spoke hastily and confusedly, as if he were defending himself from some accusation, and the old man sighed slightly as he answered:

"Well, never mind, but I thought she looked like some one—never mind—it must have been my fancy, or you would have noticed the likeness too."

"I didn't see any, sir," answered Oliver, still more hurriedly, "unless it was to any other variety actress. They're all made up so, you can't recognize them twice over."

The Senator nodded in the same absent way, and said no more, but he turned his back and strolled away to the other end of the building as if buried in deep thought.

Then the defenders had peace for about the space of an hour, and many of the men lay down on the bare earthen floor of the round-house and tried to sleep, while the officers consulted in low tones about how to get the messengers out through the lumber-yard.

There was a small door at the side which led to this yard, and everything was so quiet in that quarter that they began to hope it had escaped the notice of the rioters and that they might let out the messengers and receive help by that road.

Just as they had made up their minds to try the experiment, and while the general was writing a note in pencil to the Mayor of Pittsburg, came a sudden renewal of the fusillade all round them, with tremendous shouts, and the men jumped up and ran to their posts full of ardor.

There, in the light of the bonfire, a crowd of men were rushing to the guns; and, spite of a rapid fire from the windows, they managed to fire one more round, the shot crashing through the upper part of the round-house, and sending a shower of bricks down over its defenders.

So fierce and menacing were the assaults of the mob at this moment that they thought an immediate close conflict on that side the round-house was inevitable; and did not notice anything on the other side till the sudden cry arose:

"Fire! Fire! They've set the lumber-yard on fire!"

This appalling news came from old Senator Calvert, who had been in the rear of the building; but the old man behaved with coolness and pluck as soon as he had given the alarm.

He came toward them, the tallest man in the round-house by several inches, his grand white head and beard shining like a star, and shouted, in the stentorian tones of an old stump-speaker:

"Keep cool! I've been watching them. It's only pulling down the piles of boards and charging the villains. Keep cool, general! Keep cool, boys!"

All their coolness was needed here, and as a rule the poor beleaguered Philadelphians showed that their brief experience of danger had steadied them wonderfully. The officers did their duty bravely, and the men were divided, a part keeping the rioters from their guns, while the others dashed out of the little door, scattered the enemy out of the vicinity of the lumber-yard by a fierce volley, and began to pull down the loose piles of lumber up which the flames were slowly creeping.

But it was not done without a fierce struggle, in which both parties came within striking distance of each other, while a confused mêlée reigned in the lumber-yard for the space of half an hour or more, in which shots, shouts, orders, the sound of blows and the rattle of falling timber made a veritable pandemonium for awhile.

It was in the midst of this scene, while the brave old Senator was working like a Trojan, pulling down lumber piles, that a large party of the rioters, headed by a man of gigantic stature, dressed in a motley mantle of streaming rags, his face hidden by a shaggy forest of hair and beard, rushed into the lumber-yard, the men wielding clubbed muskets, and drove the militiamen back into the round-house, shouting:

"Nemo! Nemo! Boro Rai! Boro Rai!"

The assault was so sudden and vehement that the soldiers were entirely disconcerted, the

more so that they had just fired a volley and were caught with empty guns.

They ran into the round-house in confusion, and opened a hasty and aimless fire from the door at a crowd of rioters who seemed to spring up from the ground on all sides; but when they had slammed to the door and recovered their coolness, they discovered that the old Senator was missing.

The young general noticed it first, and called out hurriedly to Oliver Calvert:

"Your uncle's prisoner. We must rescue him! Who'll follow?"

The men all shouted assent, for they had grown to respect the grand-looking old man, and they were rushing for the door when Oliver cried out:

"Take care, general. It's a trap. They won't hurt him. He's not in uniform. They'll tear us to pieces if we go out."

And, in fact, the next moment they heard the rapid crash of timber against the small door, that told how the rioters were barricading it against any more sallies, while the crackling of flames showed that they had succeeded in their design of firing the lumber.

Now, indeed, the trials of the poor besieged Philadelphians began in earnest. The lumber was soon in flames, and only the great size of the brick building rendered it possible to stay there a moment.

As it was, the heat drove them to the other end of the building, where they lay huddled, panting, in heaps, generals and privates suffering alike.

Maddened by the heat and smoke, even Oliver Calvert lost his timidity; for a coward in a corner will fight hard. It was he who proposed, and finally led, a sally out of the large doors, in which they dashed up to the fire, which was now deserted by the rioters, and succeeded in pulling down the blazing lumber and saving the building for the time.

Strange to say, the rioters did not offer any serious opposition to this movement, and their faltered spirit; but this was easily accounted for by the scarcity of ammunition, and the fact of the darkness which covered the land.

After that last effort, the poor beleaguered citizen-soldiers, who had reached Pittsburg so gayly twelve hours before, were left comparatively unmolested, and before morning the firing had entirely ceased, for the rioters, like themselves, were tired out and sleepy.

Lagging and slow wore on the dark hours of that fatal night, and gloomy were the looks of the knot of officers who gathered in a corner of the round-house to discuss the situation.

Outside all was quiet, but they had had enough experience of the savage rioters to doubt that the attack would be renewed at daylight. They had not been able to send out a single messenger, and not a syllable of comfort had reached them from outside. Even the great railway Directors they came to help had deserted them, and they felt like outlaws, with all society against them and none to help.

"I've made up my mind, gentlemen," said the general, "that we ought to retreat as soon as it's daylight. The rioters will be going away to get something to eat about that time, and are likely to be less watchful. Once in the open country, we can cover our retreat by the fences, and this is but a small city, after all."

The advice was eagerly taken; for the boldest spirits there had had their fill of fighting, and all were willing to encounter danger if any hope of succor lay beyond.

Therefore, in the darkness and silence before dawn, the order of march was arranged, the few wounded assigned to the center, and all waited anxiously for the first peep of day.

It came at last, reddening the east, and shining on the black remnants of the fires made by the rioters. Not a soul could be seen as they opened the doors, and the column marched rapidly and silently out on the side away from the depot, and hurried up a side street toward the open country. They passed the abandoned six-pounders, all deserted, and made the best of their way out of Pittsburg for nearly a block, when they heard shots and the whistle of bullets from their rear. They were discovered.

"Forward! Double quick, march!" yelled Oliver Calvert, in a panic, and away went the head of the column in a wild rush, all order lost for a moment or two.

A vengeful shout behind them, a pattering of shots, and the whole street was black with pursuers. Pittsburg riot was over; Pittsburg races had begun.

CHAPTER XVII.

PITTSBURG RACES.

ALL the desperation that had sustained Oliver Calvert when there was no way of escape, vanished the moment he saw open country before and heard an angry foeman behind.

He forgot his uniform; the presence of others; shame; everything; and led the stampede for several hundred yards, till his breath failed him.

Then he found himself almost alone, part of the column strung out behind him, but the middle and rear quite compact, while a rattling fusillade and clouds of white smoke from the

last companies showed that they were trying to beat back the rioters.

No more bullets were flying near the fugitive Calvert, and he began to recover his coolness. Moreover, the instinct of self-preservation told him that, with his uniform on, he was safe nowhere except among the troops, who seemed to have recovered their order, and were now coming along at only a moderate pace.

Therefore Oliver halted and did what he ought to have done in the first instance: drew his sword and tried to stop the fugitives, who readily obeyed his voice now that the immediate danger was over.

He got them into some sort of order before the rest came up, and, true to his instinct of bluster when all was safe, put on his most valiant air and began to hector his fellow-runaways for leaving their regiments.

He was the more inclined to do this because he saw a large brick house near him, which he remembered to be the United States arsenal, and spied a stout, red-faced man in the undress of a regular officer, standing at a gate in a brick wall, staring down the road, his hands in his pockets.

Looking back himself, he could see that the rear guard had almost ceased firing, and judged that the danger was nearly over.

Therefore he turned and went up to the stout officer, to whom he said, with a melancholy face:

"We have had a hard time of it, major. Those fellows were too much for us."

"So I perceive," said the stout man, with the driest of accents.

"This is the arsenal, I presume," continued Oliver, sweetly.

"It is, sir."

The stout officer was stiff, not to say repellent.

"And you are the commandant, major?"

He called the stout man "major," because he perceived gold leaves on his blue shoulder-straps.

"I am, sir."

"I suppose we can halt here a little while?" asked Oliver.

"In the road, sir? No one hinders you."

"No. I mean inside. The fact is—"

"No, sir. This is Government property, and no one comes in without a permit."

"From whom, major?"

Oliver was growing bolder, for his friends were coming nearer.

"From the secretary of war, the general commanding the department, or myself."

"But surely you'll let our poor fellows have some rations?" said Oliver, pleadingly. "We were ordered out yesterday morning, and have not eaten since."

"There are no rations here. This is a storehouse for arms."

The stout officer was more repellent than ever.

"At least we can find shelter here from the mob. We can help you to defend the place," urged Oliver.

The stout officer gave him a look of intense disgust, and pointed to the weary, dirty militiamen, who were coming up, all disordered from their hurried march.

"That mob defend this place!" he snarled, bitterly. "The rioters would burn it over your heads before noon. Good-day, sir."

Without another word he went in, slammed the iron gate and bolted it behind him, and then stood glowering at the dragged column as it filed slowly and dejectedly past.

Oliver was for once completely disconcerted and could do nothing but go and report to the young general, who smiled bitterly and cursed the major for an old curmudgeon as he plodded along.

There was not a single horse in the command, and all had to march in the hot, dusty road, with the cheerful accompaniment of occasional distant hooting and shots behind them to quicken their steps if they lagged; and the consequence was that there were very few stragglers, and that all of these were ahead.

The rioters came after them for two or three miles, when they abandoned the pursuit; and the poor hunted creatures came to a halt at last on a hill, about five miles from the city, whence they looked back to see a black pall of smoke hanging over it.

The whole of the railway buildings and part of the town seemed to be on fire; for they could see the flames shooting up against a black background of smoke, distinct even in the sunlight.

But here at least they had rest, and, thanks to the tender hearts of the women of Pennsylvania, they were able to procure food at some of the numerous farm-houses that now studded the country.

Many were the curious questions and much the simple wonder of the country folks as they heard the tale of the preceding night; but they were full of moral lessons, even while they handed out the big loaves of home-made bread to the starving men.

Frequent was the comment:

"You see, if you city boys had only staid home, you wouldn't have got into this trouble. The strikers is all right."

"Not but what they're a-goin' too fur, meb-be," observed one patriarch to Oliver, as the brilliantly-clad officer sat at his table, eating his first hearty meal for two days; "but we can't blame 'em when they seen the children shot down. No, captin'."

Oliver made no reply; for he was ashamed of his own share in the transaction, now he had time to think of it.

"And if I was you, captin'," continued the sage, "I'd get rid of them soger close, soon's the Lord'd let me. They ain't safe round these parts."

"Why not?" asked Oliver, with a little start.

"Well, ye see, there's a power of tramps round here, and they're a-comin' in all the time, fresh. And I've heerd 'em a-tellin' how they was goin' to kill every blamed soger they could find. I didn't b'lieve they meant it till last night, 'cause they used to be afeared of sogers, but now they've whipped ye so bad, they ain't no tellin' what they'll do."

Oliver had listened to him with an attention that became more and more fixed, and when he had finished he asked:

"Do you think there's any—any more danger? I thought it was all over now."

"Lord bless ye, captin', it's only jest beginnin'. Where do you live to hum?"

"Calverton sometimes, other times Philadelphia," was the answer.

"Then you'd better take the fust train to Philadelfy, captin', if so be you hain't got to stay, and don't come back here till this fuss is blowed over."

"Do you really think so?" asked Calvert, wistfully.

"I reely think so—ah—what might your name be, captin'?"

"Calvert," answered the other, not thinking what he said.

"Calvert," echoed the farmer, in a tone of horror. "Not him they calls 'Mower Calvert'!"

"I don't know," answered Oliver, feeling very thirsty and not daring to drink.

"Be you the Calvert as sent the message to 'mow down the rascals?' asked the farmer, sternly.

Oliver stiffened up enough to say:

"No, no, of course not."

His lips were white as he uttered the lie and saw that the farmer knew it to be a lie.

"Well," said the old man, slowly; "if you ben't him, all right, but if you be, Lord have mercy on ye if they ketches ye anywheres this side of Altoona."

"Why?" asked Oliver, hoarsely.

"'Cause I'm told all the strikers and tramps has swore a oath on the Ten Commandments to roast Calvert the Mower over a slow fire if they ever lays hands on him," was the solemn answer.

Oliver wiped his brow hastily, and rose with tottering steps to walk to the window.

The militiamen were scattered about the roadside, finishing their hearty meal, and there was not much semblance of order among them, while many had thrown away their muskets.

He saw one man deliberately take off his uniform by the roadside, and dress himself up in an old blue shirt and trowsers, with a battered straw hat to match, after which he scrambled over a fence and disappeared across the fields.

A great many ragged figures were going the same way, and the soldiers in the road, instead of trying to stop them, called out joking messages after them, as if to old comrades.

Then Oliver turned to the old farmer with a troubled face.

"The men are deserting," he said.

"Sensible fellers," was the composed reply.

"This ain't no fittin' place for any man in sojer close. You put that down, captin'."

"Where's the general, I wonder?" muttered Oliver, watching the long stream of deserters.

"Gineral? Our gineral—him as ordered out the regiments round here—he's gone home to Squantum. He warn't meant to be no man's fool, and I'd 'a' done the same in his place," replied the patriarch, in the same sententious manner, watching Oliver keenly; and then he sidled up near him and said in a confidential tone:

"Say, captin', I've got a mighty nice little hoss as'd take you over to Roxtown Center, where the cars goes to Philadelfy, in half 'n hour, if you'd like to buy him."

Oliver felt the sweat trickle down his back as he answered:

"It wouldn't be any use in these clothes. I'd be recognized as a runaway, and my name be in all the papers. I'm one of the Governor's staff. I must stick to my duty."

The old farmer laid his hand on his shoulder.

"The hoss is jest as good fur a officer as a citizen, and there's a soot of my boy Dan's close up-stairs as'd fit you amazin' well."

"And where is your boy?" asked Calvert, without knowing what he said in his agitation.

"Over there," said the farmer, pointing to Pittsburg. "If he comes back and finds you here, he may bring the boys down on ye."

Hunted into his corner, Oliver turned.

"How much do you want?" he asked, desper-

ately. "Don't palaver any more, but tell me how much?"

The slow farmer became transformed in an instant to a shrewd man of affairs, as he exclaimed:

"That's biz. You're Calvert, the Mower. Two hundred and fifty for the hoss, fifty for the close."

Calvert hesitated.

"I've only a hundred dollars in my pocket," he said.

"Give me a check," was the brisk answer.

"If you're Oliver Calvert you're good for the money."

"All right," replied Oliver, eagerly. "Give me a pen and paper, and get the things quickly."

The bargain seemed to have put quicksilver into the limbs of the patriarch, for he whipped out pens and paper from a desk in the corner of the parlor, set the writing materials before Oliver, and ran up-stairs to the absent Dan's room, whence he soon reappeared with Dan's brown moleskin working suit—probable value five dollars or less when new—which he dumped on the floor.

"Want a razor?" he asked, in a brisk tone.

Oliver started.

"Yes, of course. Never thought of it. How I wish you had a wig."

"Dan's got a play-actor's wig, as he got off a song and dance man in Pittsburg for a loan of fifty cents," was the accommodating answer.

"I won't be mean, capting. We'll throw it in. It's red as carrots."

"All right," was Oliver's much relieved reply. "Bring it along, and here's your check."

The venerable rustic took and examined the check with much satisfaction, and toddled off to get wig and horse, while Oliver hastily drew down the blinds, shed his uniform, and drew on the shabby clothes of the absent Dan with a sense of relief that he could hardly explain.

Once dressed, he shaved off his black mustache with a trembling hand, looked into the glass, and thanked Heaven his black hair was cropped close to his head. Then he waited with much impatience for the old farmer, who soon came in, carrying the wig and a battered soft hat of gray felt with a hole in the crown, which he handed to Calvert.

Never did a young lieutenant in his first uniform survey himself with more pleasure in the glass than did Oliver Calvert behold his transmogrified reflection in the red wig and seedy clothes.

"No one would know me," he thought; "and I'll find the Governor when it's all over, and make my peace with him."

To the farmer he said:

"Now then, where's that horse, and where's the road to Roxtown?"

"This way, capting," said the sage, in his most confidential tone; and he took him out into the back yard where an old gray mare, raw-boned and pot-bellied, country grass fed from her crown to her bare hind feet, stood hitched to a post.

Rusticus showed him a lane through his fields and a distant church spire.

"That's Roxtown, and the way's across the fields. Put up the bars when ye get through, capting, so the tramps 'll find it harder to foiler ye. Good-by."

Oliver swung himself into the dilapidated saddle with a joy as great as if he had been mounting a thoroughbred, and ambled off in the direction indicated, at a sort of "dot and carry one" gait. The old mare had a string-halt.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SENATOR CALVERT.

LEAVING the valiant colonel and aid-de-camp to pursue his gory way over Pennsylvania's fields in the direction of Roxtown, let us return to the professional man of peace, Senator Calvert, when he was separated from the beleaguered troops in the round-house and surrounded by a furious mob who seemed to be thirsting for his blood.

As far as peace went, the old Senator was brimful of it, and he never flinched when the rioters came rushing at him, but on the contrary fought so desperately with a bit of scantling which he used like a quarter-staff, that he laid big Billy Barlow flat with a broken head, and sent Jim the Faker flying into the midst of a pile of blazing lumber, from which he jumped up with a howl, severely burnt.

But before the Senator could clear his way back to the door from which he had emerged he heard the rush of King Nemo and his Gipsies behind him, and a blanket was thrown over his head, in which he was caught and mace-helpless, and then he found himself trapped up and carried away unhurt, while a confused babel of sounds reached triumphantly above his head.

As soon as this happened he ceased to struggle, first, because he knew it was useless, and second, because he could not believe any one wanted to kill him, except in the excitement of battle.

Sure enough, he was not in the slightest degree injured as soon as they once had him in the blanket, but was carried rapidly away from

the scene of conflict and finally set down in some perfectly silent place.

Then some one said in a low tone close to his ear:

"We're friends. Lie still till you've counted a hundred, and then come out. Go to a hotel."

He heard the sound of rapidly fleeing footsteps and threw off the blanket from his head, regardless of the injunction to count a hundred.

He found himself in a dark alley which opened out at one end into a broad gaslit street, and four dark figures were running round the corner as fast as they could go.

The old gentleman picked himself up, adjusted his tumbled clothes, which had suffered considerably in the lumber-yard fracas, and finally put on his hat, which he found lying beside him in the alley, and walked into the street.

Then he found himself once more a private citizen, a stranger in a great city, with nothing in the world to distinguish him from any one else in the town.

"And whoever did this thing knew me!" thought the Senator. "Those rioters can't be such very bad fellows after all, and I don't wonder they were exasperated over the killing of that child and the woman."

He came out into the street and saw that he was close to the front of a theater, which bore on its bill-board, in monstrous letters:

"GRAND CACHUCA COMBINATION!!!"

followed by a description of the wonders of the Gipsy ballet.

Something recalled to the old man's mind the face of the woman he had seen in the buggy, and he remembered the words of his fellow-prisoner in the round-house. "She's a variety actress, called the Countess Cachuca."

"I'll go in and see," muttered the old Senator. "I may be mistaken, but I feel as if I could swear to her face among a thousand."

He went in and bought a ticket at the office. The lobby was empty, and the ticket-taker stared at him as if he thought it a queer time to come in, for it was nearly eleven o'clock.

However, he said nothing, and the Senator walked into the house and stalked down the center aisle toward the orchestra seats, just as the Gipsy Queen was placing her foot on the neck of her victim, who looked so like Oliver Calvert, and flourishing her gleaming knife aloft.

The old gentleman walked straight on to the orchestra rails, his tall heavy figure and grand white head attracting universal attention, inasmuch as the house was only about three-quarters full.

As he came he stared fixedly at the Gipsy Queen, and her eye caught his. An instant flush showed that she knew him.

"Ting!" went the prompt bell and down came the curtain; but as it fell, Senator Calvert kept staring, and the Gipsy Queen stared back, as if neither could resist the fascination.

As soon as the curtain was down, the old gentleman nodded and said to himself aloud:

"I thought I was not mistaken. Oliver has no memory at all."

"Why, Senator," said a voice close to him, "how did you get down here? I thought you were at Calverton."

The Senator turned to see the face of an old political friend, who caught him by the hand and continued:

"I thought I was dreaming when you came down the passage. How did you get into Pittsburg with the road blocked?"

"I came in with the troops," was the severe reply of the Senator; "the same that you people here are now trying to murder. Where's the stage door of this theater?"

His friend was so much astounded by the first part of his speech that he forgot to answer the second.

"Come in with the troops!" he echoed, in a tone of amazement. "Why, how did you get out of the round-house? I heard they were going to kill you all."

"And you seem to have cared a good deal whether they did or not," retorted Senator Calvert, bitterly. "I tell you what it is, my friend: this little night's work won't do you people any good in the end. You may kill a handful of men, half starved, by sheer numbers, but you can't kill the State of Pennsylvania. Where's the stage door of this theater? Can't you tell me?"

He asked the question so snappishly that the other answered hastily:

"Round the corner in the alleyway," pointing to the side from whence the Senator had already come.

"Thank you."

And the stout old man stalked away up the aisle, followed by a low murmur of comment from the spectators (for face and figure were both well known), and passed out into the lobby and street.

Once outside he had no trouble in tracing the alleyway in which he had been left, where he hunted about for the stage door, which he soon found.

But, though he knocked again and again, it was fully ten minutes before the door was

opened to him, and then only by a cross old man who snapped out:

"What do you mean by getting in front when you're wanted here? It's against the orders to be running backward and forward all night, and you know it as well as I do."

The old Senator interposed as soon as he could get in a word:

"My good man, I don't belong to your troupe. I—"

"Then you can't come in," snapped the old man, still more angrily. "Do you think I've nothing to do but keep a lot of guys gabbling? I've got to be up-stairs, shifting scenes, and looking after that blamed calcium, and here you are taking up my time—"

He stopped suddenly, as the Senator, who was a man of the world, held before his eyes a crisp bank bill, without another word.

"Oh, that's different," muttered the old man, in an altered tone. "Who do you want to see?"

"The Countess Cachuca—at once," whispered Calvert, stepping boldly inside the charmed precincts.

"She's in her dressin'-room," was the reply, confidentially delivered. "Shall I give any name, sir?"

"Show me the room," said the Senator. "She'll see me or I mistake much."

The doorkeeper led him up-stairs to the regions behind the curtain, whence the Pittsburg magnates had been so rudely ejected the night before, and he found the stage set for Poor Pill-coddy, with a few painted persons chatting solemnly with each other in low tones before the rising of the curtain.

They regarded the Senator with looks of surprise as he stalked across the stage; but he paid no attention, and followed his leader to the wings, where a narrow little staircase led up to a door.

"That's her door, sir."

The Senator nodded, while the doorkeeper vanished to his other multifarious duties.

Then the magnate of Calverton slowly ascended the stairs, pausing at almost every step, his face very pale, and his breath coming in labored gasps. He hesitated before something or other, and the curtain had been rung up before he finally knocked at the little dressing-room door.

When he did, he was greeted by a soft, clear voice, saying:

"Come in, Peter, I'm dressed now."

The old Senator opened the door and stood in the presence of a dark, beautiful woman, fashionably attired, who greeted him with a cold, haughty stare, and asked:

"Who are you, sir? How did you enter here?"

The old man was not taken at all by surprise at this inquiry.

He closed the door behind him, and rested two hundred and fifty pounds of solid flesh against it, before he made any reply.

Then he said, solemnly:

"*Jacqueline Raymond, where is my son?*"

The actress returned his steady gaze with interest out of her dark eyes, and curled her lip.

"Are you in your senses, sir? Who are you and who is your son?"

"I am Harvey Calvert, whose son robbed him and fled with you to a life of infamy and shame," said the Senator, slowly. "Jacqueline, you were not treated so ill in our house that you cannot recognize its master. Tell me where he is, and I will forgive you—ay, bless you."

The dark lady shrugged her shoulders.

"I'm sure I don't know what you mean, sir," she answered. "I never saw you before till you stared me out of countenance from the pit; and allow me to say that if this is your style of making love, it is both impolite and useless. Good-evening, sir. Please to go out."

But the Senator had not put himself to all this trouble to be browbeaten out of his advantage.

"Harkye, Jacqueline," he said, raising his finger to emphasize his words. "I recognized you the moment I saw you with that bearded man in the wagon. Oliver didn't know you, but I did at once—"

He paused, surprised at a singular smile that appeared on the lips of his fair antagonist, and asked:

"Why do you laugh?"

"At your tirade," was the ready reply. "I never saw you before, and you pretend to recognize me off the stage. If you will not leave the door I must ring the bell for help. I wish to go home, sir."

The old Senator never stirred.

"Ring, if you please," he said. "I am well known here, and you cannot frighten me off, Jacqueline. Tell me where is my boy, and I will go at once."

This time she laughed openly at him.

"What do I know about you or your boy? You should look after your own boys, and keep them at home; then you wouldn't have to hunt for them in the dressing-rooms of actresses."

There was something peculiarly mocking and sardonic in her tone as she said this, and the old Senator was for a moment silent. Then he answered, huskily:

"You're right, Jacqueline, you're right. Would God it were all to do over again. I may have been—I was—too hard on him, perhaps, and—"

He compressed his lips firmly and frowned as he turned away his head; but the woman's keen glance detected a tear glittering under the bushy white brows.

When he spoke again, it was with a humble, pleading accent, very unlike his former tone.

"Jacqueline Raynaud, for the last time, will you tell me where is my son?"

She shrugged and smiled.

"You are tiresome, sir," was her only answer.

Then he nodded his head slowly twice, sighed heavily, and opened the door to go out.

"I deserve it," he muttered. "Good-night, mademoiselle."

"Good-night, monsieur," was her reply, in the same tones of mockery. "I hope you may find your son, if you look for him long enough."

Then the Senator went away.

CHAPTER XIX.

A WALK IN THE PARK.

MISS HELEN CHESTER, alone and unattended, was taking a walk in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, just about the same time that her cousin Oliver was executing his masterly retreat from Pittsburg in Dan's clothes.

It was hardly the proper thing for a fashionable young lady to do even in free America, but Helen had been brought up in the country, loved fresh air and had a contempt for conventionalities that led her to do unusual things.

Her guardian had hurried her off from Calverton to Philadelphia on the morning when she had found the tramp's letter pinned to the tree, and had left her at her aunt Mary's house, a quiet little mansion not far from the Park, in one of those cozy little alleyways so delightfully frequent on the north side of Philadelphia.

Aunt Mary—otherwise Mrs. Chester—was a quiet old Quaker lady, who, being a cousin of Senator Calvert, had married Helen's uncle, and, being a widow, had taken great interest in the orphan heiress, who had a confusing way of calling all her older relatives "uncle and aunt," including her guardian, who was really only her second cousin.

The old lady had never made much effort to control Helen and only urged the feeblest objections to her niece's lonely rambles in the Park in the unsettled state of things consequent on the riot summer.

Helen had, however, no fears on the subject. Since her adventure with the burglars, the girl had developed a wonderful amount of self-confidence and control, and had frightened her Quaker aunt half to death the very first day of her arrival by showing her a neat little revolver which she carried in a pocket under her pull-back skirts and could use well at need.

Mrs. Chester was in despair at this fresh variety of her niece.

"Why will thee be masculine, Helen? Thee doesn't surely think of shooting any one, does thee?"

"No, aunt Mary, but I don't see why a woman shouldn't be able to take care of herself if she's going to be alone all her life, and I shall probably die an old maid, so I want to begin early."

"But what does thee want with a pistol, Helen?"

"To take care of myself against any stray tramps, aunty. I know a girl who can shoot as well as any man and who has owed her life and safety to it, many a time."

"Then she must be a very strange girl, Helen," responded her aunt, severely. "Sober, decent girls don't run into scrapes that require a pistol to save them. Thee knows that as well as I do."

Helen flushed and replied with more heat than she usually showed to her dovelike relative.

"The poor creature, like me, was a motherless girl, and misfortune drove her into danger. You talk like the rest of the world, aunt Mary, and I hope you'll repent it some day."

So saying, Miss Helen went out of the room with something very like a flounce, and put on her things for that stroll in the park with which we opened this chapter, not forgetting her little nickel-plated friend under the pull back.

She passed unheeding by all the show parts of the park which were almost deserted at that early hour in the morning, and strolled on till she found herself in a secluded spot some way up the Schuylkill river bank.

There, in a nook among thickets and neglected walks, was an old rustic arbor overgrown with vines, looking out on the river and its passing boats, and here Helen took her seat and began to read a book.

Whether she understood what she read is doubtful, for she lifted her eyes from the leaves almost every minute, and once had to turn the book round, discovering that she was holding it upside down.

In fact it needed but little penetration on the part of any observer to hazard the assertion that Miss Chester was expecting to meet some one in that secluded spot.

Sure enough, after half an hour's more or less impatient waiting, steps sounded on the walk, and a bright red patch could be seen through the leaves of the adjacent thicket moving along.

Helen Chester closed her book with an air of vexation and murmured to herself:

"It's some one else, after all. Can she have disappointed me?"

The next moment the light, graceful figure of a girl in a scarlet cloak tripped into view and came straight toward the arbor where Helen sat.

This girl was as dark as an Indian, with large black eyes and clustering curls of ebony hue framing her oval face under the red hood.

She had a pleading smile on her red lips, disclosing teeth like rows of pearls between them.

Her figure was lithe as that of an antelope, and her little feet and ankles were fully revealed by the short striped skirt she wore.

Physically she was perfectly beautiful in her dark style, and it was with the sweetest of voices that she said to Helen:

"Won't the pretty lady cross the poor Gipsy's palm with silver and hear her fortune told?"

Helen curled her lip.

"What do you know about fortune?" she asked. "I don't care for your silly prophecies. Go away."

The Gipsy girl looked at her with a mysterious air and answered:

"I know all about fortunes. I am Gipsy Nan, and my Duroken Lil never makes a mistake."

"And what's your Duroken Lil?" asked Helen, skeptically.

"My book of magic," answered Gipsy Nan, in a hushed sort of way. "Don't talk ill of it, for it's unlucky. I know what you came here for to-day."

"Well, what?" asked Helen, her color beginning to rise.

"You came to meet one who is not here, for the reason that she is far away with the Romanichal."

Helen turned scarlet.

"How dare you say that?" she asked. "Who are you and what do you want with me this morning?"

"I want to tell the pretty lady what will happen to her, if she will let me see her hand," answered Nan, with the same coaxing smile.

Helen could not help laughing at her pertinacity, and held out her hand to the Gipsy girl, who looked at it intently.

Presently she said, in her most mysterious way:

"Fortune and happiness are far off from the beautiful lady now, but they will come to her if she has the courage to wait and work as she will tell her. There is a tangle to unravel, a snake to be drawn from his hole, a wrong to right, a man to punish, a woman to save. She sends you this."

She dropped Helen's hand and left therein a small note which the girl eagerly clasped, crying:

"You are a messenger from her or him. Why did not you say so before?"

Nan only smiled in her old mocking mysterious way as she answered:

"Will the pretty lady cross the Gipsy's palm now?"

"Certainly."

And Helen dived for her pocket-book and gave Nan a new bill, to the Gipsy's great delight, while the young lady eagerly read the note.

It was very brief.

"I cannot come to-day, and send Nan. She knows all. Tell her all. JACKO."

Helen raised her eyes to Nan.

"Where is Jacko?" she asked.

The Gipsy laughed.

"She's a queen now. Money plenty. What shall I say to her?"

"Tell her I will follow the advice she gave me at Calverton to the letter. Why could she not come?"

"She is far away," replied Nan, in an evasive way. "She told me to tell you to watch him you know of, and get his secret."

Helen smiled.

"Easier said than done. I hate him, and he knows it."

"That's nothing," answered the Gipsy, confidently. "A Romaniche would choomer a gorgio to get a secret any time."

"And what's choomer a gorgio?" asked Helen, wonderingly.

"Kiss a stranger. Any man will tell a secret for love."

"Then you mean I am to make love to him to get his secret from him?" said Helen, inquiringly.

Gipsy Nan laughed.

"Get his secret. Jacko got it, but no one will believe her. You are a Rancee—a boro Rancee—a great lady. Any one will believe you, when they would hunt a Romaniche out of the place."

"Well," said Helen, slowly, "I'll think of it. Nanny. In the meantime tell me when I shall see him whom Jacko and I know?"

Gipsy Nan smiled.

"When wrong is right and truth is told; the lost son will come to light, and all will be happy. So she says, and I can say no more."

Then the Gipsy dropped a courtesy and left the arbor at a rapid, springy walk, Helen watching her in a mute reverie as she took her way out of sight, when the young lady slowly followed her.

Nan crossed the park and went over the railway bridge to the station, where she stopped just as a stream of passengers came out.

The Gipsy watched them keenly with the instinct of her class, under a manner of assumed indifference till she suddenly started despite her self-command as a tall, red-haired, slouchy-looking countryman in a brown moleskin suit, worn and dirty, came shambling out of the depot and walked toward Market street.

There was nothing so very uncommon in the looks of this person, save one item that Nan instantly noted.

He was wearing a red wig.

She spied a lock of black hair on the nape of his neck, and instantly jumped to the conclusion that he was a detective, or some such person, disguised.

At any other time Nan would have given such a person a wide berth, but those were times when her class were particularly bold, and she resolved to see him a little closer.

She had come from Pittsburg herself on the very day of the riots, in the last train that was allowed to pass, sent on a secret errand by the chief of her band, and was going back at once, when she met this man.

A moment later she was in front of him, begging and staring up in his face all the while.

"Please, kind gentleman, let the Gipsy tell your fortune."

"Go to the devil!" was the sullen reply. "Keep out of my way, or I'll call a policeman, you brazen baggage."

But Gipsy Nan had seen and heard all she wanted. She knew Oliver Calvert in a moment, spite of all his disguise, from the tones of his voice and the expression of his face, the same she had seen on the lawn at Calverton, a few days ago.

She fell back with affected timidity to allow him to pass, and then followed him up at a little distance.

She noticed that he looked ashamed, and shambled along the street as if trying to avoid observation.

Not only was this the case with him, but there were other men, roughly dressed, but with pale faces, and soft, white hands, who went sneaking off from the cars, and vanishing down side streets, as if desirous of hiding themselves.

At first she thought them tramps, but she was undeceived a little later by hearing the newsboys shouting:

"Extra Times! Got the total defeat of the Filadelfy malishy! Pittsburg in flames! All the troops killed!"

"Oho!" said Nan to herself with a triumphant air. "So the tramps have had the best of it this time, and those gorgios have run away in other people's clothes. Now the Romanichal will have justice."

So saying, Nan slipped off her red cloak, put down the hood, turned it inside out, showing a dark, plain lining, made a few rapid changes in her personal appearance, by letting down a looped-up skirt, and then boldly started down the street, quite transmogrified into a sober, quiet working-girl in a long brown dress, who shadowed Oliver Calvert like a spirit till she traced him into the Continental Hotel, where he finally disappeared, though not till after a visit to a clothing store, of which more hereafter.

Then she turned and went back to the cars, which, half an hour later, were on their way to Pittsburg, or as near there as they could get.

Nan was going back to make her report.

CHAPTER XX.

HELEN'S PROMISE.

WHEN Oliver Calvert reached the Continental Hotel, where he was well known, he took the opportunity to dash off his red wig, in the first dark passage, before he went up to the desk, and thus made his appearance before the clerk only partially changed.

Nevertheless, that individual hardly knew him, and was much surprised when the fugitive spoke to him in a low voice, and asked him for a room to change his dress.

Then, as the perception gradually dawned on the clerk who was his visitor, he ejaculated:

"Certainly, judge, certainly. Just come back from Pittsburg, I suppose."

"How do you know that?" asked the other, turning red.

"Had a lot of refugees in to-day to change their clothes, and most of 'em had some sort of uniform in their bags. All agreed the rioters had killed the rest of the regiment. Had a hot time, judge; I mean colonel?"

"Hot enough," replied Oliver, trying to look indifferent. "The men had to retreat at last, and I was cut off from them and in the hands of the rioters. I made my escape in disguise, as you see. Come, hurry up with that room."

The clerk rang a bell and ordered a waiter to

show Oliver to a room, but there was a sort of grin on his face as he did so, that was only the reflection of that on many another face in those days, especially if the wearer had not been in Pittsburg, and did not belong to the militia.

It was unmistakable and supercilious scorn, much of it undeserved, under which the victims of the round-house were doomed to suffer for many weeks after.

Oliver Calvert and those who had sneaked off with him in the same manner were fair subjects for this feeling, but many of the others were not, for they had only done their duty.

However, the ex-colonel in mufti made no particular note of the clerk's grin, but hurried up to his room to resume a respectable appearance. His object was to so cover his tracks, that he might not be compelled to call at Mrs. Chester's house in any disguise; and with that object in view he had stopped on his way to the hotel to purchase a ready-made suit, which he hastily donned while consigning the absent Dan's garments to the safe seclusion of the locked valise.

When he was once more respectable he went down-stairs again, and sallied out to find his cousin Helen, all prepared with a plausible story.

He found the city wearing much of its usual appearance, though there were a good many groups at the street corners, men discussing the news from Pittsburg, while the sale of papers was flourishing.

On his way to the Chesters the escaped colonel bought an extra, and learned, for the first time, that the rioters had burned the round-house and depot, and that a large part of Pittsburg was then in flames, while the exploits of the Philadelphia troops were set forth as prodigies of valor, and the regular army major was overwhelmed with obloquy for his refusal to assist the beaten militiamen.

This paper made Oliver feel more tranquil in his mind, for he had hitherto felt very much ashamed of himself; and the look of the clerk had been far from flattering.

He took a horse-car in a side street, and went up toward the park, whence he soon reached Mrs. Chester's neighborhood, and was nearing her house, when, in turning a corner, he came directly on Helen, leisurely strolling along under her parasol.

His first impulse was to go the other way, for he dreaded the sarcastic tongue of his brilliant cousin; but she had already seen him, and met him with a bright smile and extended hand.

"Why, Oliver, where did you come from and what made you shave off your moustache?"

He stammered and colored.

"Oh, nothing. Hot weather, you know."

"But I thought you were in Pittsburg. Uncle Harvey said you had gone there to quell the riots. Did you see him? He went along with the soldiers."

"Yes, Helen, I did see him, and a hard time we all had. Haven't you read the papers?"

"I don't care to read them generally. They're too stupid. I saw one yesterday evening, that told how the soldiers had fired on the rioters and driven them off in confusion. Were you there, cousin Oliver?"

"And have you seen nothing since—nothing at all?"

She looked surprised.

"No. Aunt Mary doesn't read the papers, and we live very quietly."

"Then look at that."

And he handed her the extra which described the closing of the battle, by which Helen learned for the first time of the disaster.

She read it through, her face getting paler and more serious as she went on, and then suddenly faced on him with the question:

"What's uncle Harvey? Did you leave him to be killed? The paper doesn't say a word about him, and I know he was there. Where is he?"

She was quivering with excitement while she spoke, for she was very fond of the old man, who had always been kind to her.

Oliver put on his most protecting and considerate face.

"If you will walk with me to aunt Mary's, I'll tell you, Helen. I have seen the Senator, and we were both together in that dreadful round-house, but we were separated in one of the attacks, and I fear he is a prisoner in their hands."

"Then he is killed," was all she said, in a tone of despair, "and he will never know—"

She did not finish the sentence; but compressed her lips firmly and walked on, for Helen had unusual self-control and hated to be seen crying.

Oliver walked beside her for some minutes without speaking, and then gently remarked:

"I think it's probably safe, Helen. The mob had no spite, save against men in uniform; and, once outside, he could have mingled with the crowd without danger. We shall soon hear from him, if, indeed, he is not here already. I was the only person in special danger, for they had sworn to hang me if they caught me."

She turned on him quickly.

"Yes, for that telegram of yours. I told you how it would be."

"I admit it, Helen; but I could not let them see I was afraid."

Helen regarded him with a singular glance of covert contempt.

A few days earlier, she would have broken out in some bitter speech; but something restrained her now, and she said nothing till they came to Mrs. Chester's house, where the first person they saw on the steps was a telegraph boy, ringing the bell.

Helen's eyes lighted up and she hurriedly addressed the boy.

"Where is that from?"

"Pittsburg, ma'am, as near as they could get. Wires are down for five miles out."

"Who's the message for?"

"Miss Helen Chester, ma'am. Are you the lady?"

"Yes, yes."

And Helen snatched the telegram from the boy's hand and tore it open, while Oliver signed the receipt-book.

The message ran:

"The Senator is safe. Fear nothing. Remember my advice. JACKO."

She crushed it up in her hand and turned to the boy with a sweet smile, saying:

"You're a nice boy. Take this."

And she slipped a dollar bill into his hand; for Helen had always had plenty of money and was a little inclined to be extravagant.

The boy touched his hat and went off radiant, while Oliver fidgeted, and at last ventured to ask:

"Who was that from, Helen?"

"Oh, no one—a friend of mine in Pittsburg, to say uncle Harvey is all safe. Come in, Oliver."

And nothing more could be got out of her after they were in the house, for she fluttered about from one subject to another with a vivacity all her own, engaging him in all sorts of disputes with aunt Mary, who sided with the rioters and did not believe in military measures of any kind.

"They that take the sword shall die by the sword, Oliver. There's found that out by this time," observed aunt Mary, placidly, knitting away. "I'm sorry thy men were hurt, of course; but if thee asks my opinion, I must say I think they deserved what they got. Did thee come home in uniform, Oliver?"

"No, aunt; I was captured and going to be murdered, when I managed to slip away in the dark by taking the clothes of a dead rioter."

The old lady shuddered.

"And wasn't thee ashamed to spoil the dead, Oliver?"

"It was neck or nothing with me then," he answered, coolly. "You know we soldiers can't stick at trifles."

He did not see the humorous twinkle in Helen's eyes, because at that moment she was arranging some flowers in a vase behind him, and her voice was as soft as the cooing of a dove as she observed:

"Poor Oliver must have had a very hard time, aunt Mary. It's a shame to abuse him. For my part, I feel quite proud of his escape. But he must be very hungry after all this. Let me order lunch."

"Certainly, child; thee knows where to find Rebecca."

And most assiduous were the cares bestowed by Helen on the dejected hero of the riots all that afternoon, by which she soothed his self-love, flattered his vanity, and encouraged his hopes to that extent that he soon forgot all about the mysterious telegram, and became more devoted to his handsome cousin than he had ever been before, which was needless.

For the first time in several years, Oliver Calvert began to hope that Helen was growing kind to him. He had paid assiduous court to her for all that time, for the sake of her wealth and beauty, but had never hitherto been able to flatter himself with any reasonable prospect of success.

He had tried every means of ingratiating himself with her, for he was determined to marry Helen if he could, but had been treated with so much scorn and contempt that even his assurance had been unequal to the task of inducing her to marry him.

And now, all of a sudden, she was kind and talked sweetly to Oliver, while the faintest smile upon her face lifted the weight of care from her brows and in her great white necker.

Oliver was not the man to neglect making hay at proper seasons, and soon established himself on a more solid basis than Helen, who then talked to him with a confidence which she never showed to any other man.

"Helen," he presently said, when she had been remarkably kind for awhile; "how much pleasure this is to me when we quarrel all the time. I feel as if I should like to stay here for ever."

"Oh, dear, no," she smiled. "We should quarrel the lot of each other if we were together all the time."

"I should never get tired of you," he protested. "Why won't you say you'll marry me, Helen? I could give you all your heart could desire, and love you better than any one else in the world."

"Could you?" she asked, playfully. "But suppose I couldn't care for you, Oliver? Where would my happiness be then?"

"I'd make you love me. You couldn't help it long."

"But suppose I loved some one else, cousin Oliver?"

"I wouldn't care for that. I'd end, by making you forget him."

"You're very confident, sir."

"I am, because I'm very much in love. Say yes, and you'll never repent it, Helen."

"But if I said yes, I should make a condition, Oliver."

"Make any conditions, and I swear to fulfill them all," he answered, eagerly, for he began to think she was weakening.

Helen's eyes had a strange glitter in the darkened room as she looked down in his eager, impassioned face.

"Will you swear on your faith in all that is holy, to do anything I tell you, if I will promise to marry you, Oliver Calvert?"

He gave a slight start and looked at her doubtfully for a moment; but then he compressed his lips and answered:

"I swear it on my soul, Helen."

Then she stopped waving her fan, and her voice trembled ever so slightly as she said to him:

"Bring back Harvey Calvert to his home and reconcile him to his father, and I will make no further opposition."

The words had, as she knew they would have, a great effect on him.

He sat still a moment, seeming to shrink into himself, and then moved away to the other end of the settee, whence he stared at her in silence.

For a little space not a word was spoken, and then Oliver asked in husky tones:

"Bring back Harvey? How can I do it, Helen? I don't know where he is."

He stopped with a sort of gasp.

"Very well," she replied, quietly, "then we need say no more about the matter, Oliver."

Softly she rose from her seat, gathered her dress round her and was about sweeping from the room, when Oliver rose in his turn and laid his hand on her sleeve to detain her.

"Don't go yet, Helen," he said, pleadingly. "I'll do anything in my power to please you, but how can I perform what is impossible?"

"The man that wins me must laugh at impossibilities," answered Helen, haughtily. "I have made my condition. Till it is fulfilled, press me no more."

"Stay one little moment," he said, huskily.

"If I—I—bring him back to his father, will you perform your part of the agreement? will you marry me, Helen?"

"I have said what I mean once," she answered, slowly. "Bring him back, and I will not oppose you."

Then she left the room.

CHAPTER XXI.

GIPSY NAN.

WHEN Gipsy Nan finally left the cars, she found herself at the station where Oliver Calvert had first met the soldiers. The train ran no further, and indeed they could not get that far; for the whole line from Pittsburg on both tracks was choked with strings of freight cars in a solid, unbroken procession, stretching several hundred yards beyond the station at which Nan stopped.

The Gipsy was, as we have seen, an adept at disguise, and no one would have thought her anything but a quiet, rather stupid country girl, as she stepped out of the train in a brown dress and a gray shawl, carrying a handbox, which held her red and brown reversible cloak, with some other toggery.

She had even taken the precaution to powder her dark face and hide her black hair under a scrubby brown wig, with a very loud country bonnet to match.

Nan was already a skillful detective, and had taken with ardor to the service on which she was that day employed; though she did not realize its full importance, having merely repeated words with which she was charged.

She was not afraid of a six-mile tramp, or she would have been no true *Romanich*, so she set off on the dusty road to Pittsburg, swinging her handbox and singing as she went, as soon as she got alone where no one could hear her, for Nan was given to naughty Romanly ballads, that she didn't care to let a *gorgio* hear.

Like most of her people she was proud and jealous of her language, which she did not like to betray to any one who did not know it already, and therefore it was not till she was in a deserted shady lane leading to Pittsburg that she finally lifted out her first ballad:

NAN'S SONG.

He knows me so well, this time I'm sure,
And I know him too, for I know his name;
He's a good fellow, and a true one,
And I'll love him as long as I live.

The sound of her own voice seemed to exhilarate her, for she began to sing and jiggle as

she went along, and sung the second verse at the full pitch of a sweet and powerful voice, which she possessed in common with many of her race.

Mr. kamava miro kam, miro kone kamlidir,
Miro kone kamlidir kone choomava man,
Ava giv, Romanichil!
Ave giv, Romanichil!
Choomer kone kashtidir, miro kam.*

The song was like herself and all her race, light, voluptuous, and living in the present alone; but Nan sung it with such birdlike sweetness to a soft Roman air that it captivated the attention of one listener at least, who rose up from under a tree where he was lolling at full length and exposed to view the well-known face and figure of Mr. William Barlow, better known as the Boss of the Bummers.

Mr. Barlow had made a great change for the better in his personal appearance as far as clothes went, for he was appareled in the most shiny of black broadcloth, and had on his feet a pair of enormous patent leather boots; but the effect of this raiment was marred by the fact that he had on a shirt not large enough for him, and so had neglected to button it at the neck, or to put on any collar, though he sported a grand diamond pin in the middle of his breast.

Otherwise Mr. Barlow was the essence of ponderous respectability in his attire, and sported a watch in each of his vest pockets, with the most gorgeous of chains depending therefrom, while he was lazily fanning himself with a large and beautifully mounted fan, a delicate toy of ivory, satin and gold.

To complete the unlooked-for features of his equipment, Mr. Barlow rested his hand on a musket, while some belts and a pouch lay under the tree beside him.

"Well, my gal, if you ain't the piece I've been lookin' fur all day!" he exclaimed, a broad smile lighting up his dirty face.

For, with all his fine clothes, the Boss of the Bummers had neglected the little ceremony of washing as below his dignity.

"Here I've been a-sweatin' under that 'ere tree all the mornin', a waitin' fur a nice little gal to come along and take a crink with me; and here you come as pritty as a pacter and as sweet as—oh, jiminy!"

His feelings were too much for Mr. Barlow, and he smacked his lips and hugged the air with his arms as he danced about in the road before Nan, barring her further progress toward the city.

The girl had one advantage over him, that she knew who he was, while she herself was thoroughly disguised. Moreover, she could see from his gestures and general appearance that the Boss of the Bummers was a little more than half-seas over, a conclusion confirmed by the presence of two empty bottles lying in the road near Mr. Barlow's late couch.

"Who are you, anyway?" he went on, trying to come near her with steady steps and failing in the attempt; and what were that you was a-singin'! Eyetalian or Dutch, or what? Say! Hain't ye got no tongue?"

Nan had been watching him with the cat-like vigilance, quite unmixed with fear, of her hardy, self-reliant race, and now she curled her red lip and retorted:

"What's that to you? Get out of my way, or it'll be the worse for you. Do you hear?"

"Yes, I hear, my charmer," replied the amorous Boss of the Bummers, staggering to and fro to intercept her. "I ain't no tramp now, I want you to un'stan'. I'm a gemman—a gemman, by Jiminy! I lives on my stamps, and all I want's a nice gal to make me's happy's a king. Look ahere, ole gal!"

And with a drunken howl of exultation he dived into his pockets, throwing down his gun for the purpose, and hauled out two great rolls of bills, which he shook in her face with a maudlin grin.

"Look a' that 'n' smile!" he said, after a while, in a tone of severe gravity. "That's fur the gal as is good to me. I'm the king of Pittsburg, I am, and dam the man I can't lick."

Nan would have been no true Gypsy if the sight of the money had had no effect on her. At first she had been very much disgusted to find Billy Barlow in her way; for like most Gypsies, she had a great contempt for tramps of any other race; but now she saw he was drunk and unable to do her any serious harm if she preserved her distance.

Therefore she suddenly changed her manner to one of great sweetness, and exclaimed:

"Why, Mr. Barlow, is that you? I declare

*A fair specimen of the tone and manner of the Gypsy songs, when they are not more openly licentious.

I love my love, my dearest love,
And my dearest love loves me,
I will kiss him all the day,
I will kiss him all the night,
And my dearest love will kiss me.

I love my love, my dearest love,
My dearest love who kisses me,
Come, sing, ye Gypsy lads!
Come, sing, ye Gypsy lads!
What better than a kiss, oh my love?

I didn't know you at first. Why, how do you do?"

The Boss of the Bummers stared at her in a stupid kind of fashion for a minute, and then burst out:

"Well, bu'st my bloomin' skin if she ain't one of us arter all! Say! who are you, anyway? You've be'n goin' through some one to get all those store close."

"Who did you go through to get what you have on?" asked Nan, coolly, in her turn.

"Mel! Oh, taters and hogs' tails! I've be'n through half the stores in Grubstip, I have; and we've be'n just havin' a heloftime since we whipped the sogers. Why, we gets all the liquor we wants, and the stores is left empty, and half the town's a-burnin' away like sixty. See what a soot I got. 'Tain't cool, like my old one; but, Jiminy Moses! ain't it handsome! Look at them watches. I bu'sted an old cove in the snoot in his own shop, and tuk 'em afore his eyes, and he dasn't say a word. Tell you, sis, the people's a-gettin' their rights now, if they never did afore."

"Well you don't want both those watches, Bill. 'Twould be real nice in you to give me one," said the Gypsy girl, artfully, and as she spoke she came close to him.

Mr. Barlow began to smile with drunken fatuity.

"Oh you coxin' little devil," he said; "you know how to come it over old Bill. Blow my bloomin' daylight if I wouldn't take the shirt off my back to blige a nice gal. Take which on 'em ye likes. Keep it on both chains, and they's stem-winders also. Bu'st me if he didn't say so, the old thief, just arter I dropped him."

Nan had not the slightest scruple in playing Deiliah to this dirty Samson in new clothes, and she knew him well enough in all his moods to feel quite safe, while she pretended to coax him and stay near him.

With perfect impartiality she examined the watches, selected the handsomest—a jeweled stem-winder of great value—and then as tranquilly picked Barlow's pocket of the other, while he was stroking her brown wig and calling her all sorts of pretty names.

Then she observed quietly:

"Is that real money you had just now, or is it only flash flimsy?" (counterfeit bills.)

The hint was enough for Mr. Barlow, who forthwith dived once more into his trousers' pockets and fished out two double handfuls of bills more or less worn.

"Cracked the Grubstip Bank only last night," he said, proudly. "See what I got for my share. Want to look at 'em?"

"Ay," said Nan, in the same careless way, and the drunken tramp actually poured the money into her lap as she sat down under the tree, the better to lull his suspicions, while he threw himself down beside her and clasped his arms round her waist.

"Go along with you, Bill," she said, in affected anger. "You don't leave me alone till I can count the money. There's enough here to take us out of this and live an honest life where no one will know us. Let me count it, afore you begin to fool with me."

"All right," said the tramp, solemnly, and he rolled over on his other side. "Hurry up with the countin' and tell us what's there."

Nan smoothed out the bills with her hands and began to count aloud to keep his attention on them, till she had the package nicely folded.

Then she suddenly leaped to her feet, ran to the gun Barlow had dropped in the road, snatched it up, and started on a run as swift as her well-trained limbs could carry her.

As she went she looked back over her shoulder, saw the victimized Boss of the Bummers scrambling to his feet and come staggering after her, and laughed back a shrill defiance at him.

Presently she began to come into the more frequented roads and saw before her in the distance the blackened ruins and curling smoke that showed where Pittsburg had lain, handsome and picturesque, when she left it the day before. The mob had truly glutted its thirst for vengeance.

But Nan knew well enough from the escape she had just had from Billy Barlow that she could not hope for safety any more in her quiet country girl's dress. As a decent character she was subject to insult from every tramp she met, and Mr. Barlow's attire and revelations showed that the tramps had the upper hand in Pittsburg at that time.

Only by getting back to her own band and resuming her Gypsy dress could she hope for safety, and in a twinkling Nan had climbed over a stone wall and hurried over a few intervening fields to an old stone quarry, which she remembered to be in the neighborhood, where she quickly changed her dress to the short skirts of the Gypsy ballet girl; and, thus lightly equipped, made her way into Pittsburg without any further molestation.

On the way she spied Mr. Barlow moving with devious and uncertain steps down a road on which were some female tramps far ahead, and Nan laughed to herself as she thought how cleverly she had tricked him out of watch, money and a gun at one fell swoop.

CHAPTER XXII.

LAW AND ORDER.

As soon as Nan found herself in Pittsburg she paid a visit to the theater, where her people had been performing in the Gypsy ballet under the mysterious Countess Cachuca, with the tall agent who was as the reader doubtless surmises none other than King Nemo, with his hair combed and his body in good clothes.

Luckily for Nan, the opera house had escaped the flames which had ruined a large part of Pittsburg, and she had no difficulty in finding her companions and asking for the *Boro Kai*, as the Gypsies always called their chief.

They told her he was out with the men, working to stop the fire; for by this time Pittsburg had begun to rouse up to a conviction that things had gone about far enough.

The militia had all been driven out of the city, the police had taken off their uniforms and disappeared, the mayor and aldermen had hidden themselves, tramps and all sorts of desperadoes were openly swarming the streets, entering the houses where there were none but women, and bullying the peaceful inhabitants out of anything they wanted.

For a brief period there was a perfect reign of terror in Pittsburg; and society looked on at its own disorganization with sullen apathy.

Gypsy Nan entered the city just at the end of this period, and found the feeling to be one of gluffed vengeance.

"We licked those darned Filadelfy galoots," she heard one man say. "They won't come here dictatin' to us what we shall do, and now I don't care what happens."

Such was the general feeling of the Pittsburgers just after the defeat of the Philadelphia division and burning of the railway buildings.

They sympathized with the strikers against the railway magnates, and felt delighted at the losses of the latter. They cheered as they saw the flames burn up depôt, cars, machine shops and all the rest, and said to each other:

"Serves 'em right for taking the bread out of poor men's mouths."

But when the rioters began to take hold of the city itself, the people began to reflect for the first time that there might be two sides to a question, and they were in this state when Nan arrived at the opera house.

Her mistress was nowhere to be seen, but Peter Griengro told her with a wink that the "*Ranee layum rehamyas toderas*"—that is, that the Countess had assumed male attire (lit. "taken the breeches to-day") and was with the men at the fire.

So Nan set off with Peter to find her; for Peter had long been her recognized lover in the band and was by no means loth to escort her anywhere.

Presently, as they went along the streets, they saw a crowd before them coming from the railway and moving along with silence unusual in Pittsburg in those days.

Peter drew Nan back into the entryway of a deserted house, and they watched the crowd pass.

At the head was a rabble of curious boys such as generally attends a military procession, and in the middle marched a solid column, four abreast, of quiet, serious-looking men, who generally wore old army blouses, and all bore muskets and belts of one pattern.

They seemed to be under the command of a gray-headed man who wore a shabby old uniform coat with faded shoulder-straps, an army hat of twenty-year-old paterif, and a faded crimson sash arranged over his shoulder and crossing his breast, down to his old-fashioned infantry sword-belt.

As this veteran, quiet and resolute, advanced, a great silence came over the street. He looked about him, motioned with his hand and spoke in a composed, determined sort of way to a few tramps who were staring at him.

"Come, boys, you must get out of that. If you live in the town, go home. If you don't, clear out as quick as you can go. There's no more milish here, and we want all the tramps out of the city."

Nan noticed that the tramps did not hesitate long after the veteran spoke to them, but moved on.

One burly fellow made bold to ask:

"Who'n'clare you anyway?"

The words were hardly out of his mouth when a tall man in an old Confederate uniform, with the stripes of a sergeant on his arms, came rushing at the big tramp with a cocked musket in his hand and the look of a fiend in his thin face, hissing out:

"Don't you hear what the officer of the day says? Get! or by the bones of old Stonewall Jackson, I'll go through ye like a dose of salts!"

The tramp stared one little moment, and then, as the sergeant threw up his gun to his shoulder, the bully turned and fled down the street like a hunted deer with all his friends, while the sergeant smiled in a grim sort of fashion, uncocked his piece, and fell back into his place on the flank of the column.

The effect of the passage of this quiet, resolute body of men was very marked on the street after they had passed through it.

At first it was left empty and silent, but in a few minutes Nan saw windows and doors opened in houses that had been closed up before, and women began to come out and talk to each other.

Then Peter said to her:

"That's what the *gorgios* call the Committee of Safety. They used to be soldiers when we were babies. The gray men and the blue men were enemies then, and now they fight side by side."

And Nan, who did not understand much about it, said:

"I hope they'll bring the tramps to order, or we shall have no house to-night. Let's go on."

They went on until the clouds of smoke and the scorching heat of sun and fire combined, made them hesitate before going nearer to the burning buildings, where the clanging of the engines, and the hoarse shouts of firemen at work made a great contrast to the quiet now controlling the rest of the city.

Here, also, they found the members of the ubiquitous Committee of Safety, some in old, faded uniforms, more in civilian dress, but all decent in general appearance, and performing sentry and patrol duty with a stern vigilance that permitted nothing to escape it.

The decency of Pittsburg had roused itself and assumed the control of its own order in the most effectual manner.

Within an hour from the time Nan beheld the Vigilance Committee of veterans patrolling the streets, order was reestablished in the city; the police had reappeared, with the aldermen and mayor, who had disappeared on the day of the great riot, shops were opened, business resumed its flow, and the fire was under control and burning itself harmlessly out, surrounded by blackened open spaces.

Then at last Nan found the Gipsy King, no longer in his rags, but in the role of Mr. Harvey, with the men of his band all round him, working manfully beside the firemen.

As soon as he saw the girl he left his men and came to meet her, asking eagerly, in a low tone:

"Did you see her?"

Nan told him the result of her stolen interview with Helen, and then asked:

"Where is my lady?"

Nemo nodded toward the firemen, and there, with his rakish-looking velvet jacket slung over one shoulder, his fair curls waving in the light breeze raised by the fire, stood Spunky Jack, the old antagonist of Mr. Barlow, revealed by Nemo's speech as a woman.

Nan went up to the boy-girl and said to her, in a low tone:

"I saw the man you hate. He is safe in Philadelphia. He went there in disguise, but I knew him at once."

Spunky Jack flushed a little, and asked:

"Did you give her my message?"

"I did, and the *Ramus* said she would think over it. She wants to see you and him you both know of very badly."

"She shall in good time," answered Jack, thoughtfully, and then the head fireman came round to tell them that there was no more need of their services that day, so that the members of the Great Cachuca Combination went back to the opera house to rehearse a new ballet.

That night the theater was packed to see the Countess and the Gipsies who had made themselves so honorably conspicuous by their good behavior during the siege.

Pittsburg had redeemed itself after a fiery trial and felt proud of every one who had stood by it in its trouble, so that it seemed as if the Cachuca Combination was likely now to reap a shining harvest for all its past labors.

The papers overflowed with the most gorgeous notices next day, along with accounts of the arrival of the U. S. troops, the Governor of the State, a real U. S. major-general, and who knows how many other gorgeous persons.

For another week Pittsburg was full of bustle repairing damages, while the Cachuca Combination was coining money, the next the whole company started off in the cars for Philadelphia, whither Senator Calvert went in the same train.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A FATHER'S HEART.

AUNT MARY was still calmly at work on the knitting which never seemed to have an end; Helen was lying on a lounge reading the last news from the riot districts, which were almost quiet by this time; the gentle summer breeze was waving the light window curtains, and the shrill buzzing of myriads of flies was on the air; when Senator Calvert, erect and imposing as ever, but wearing a worn and weary look on his face, came up the little street where the Quaker lady lived and rung the door-bell of her house.

Aunt Mary started from the doze into which she had been nodding over her knitting, and said:

"Helen, I declare! Did thee hear that? It must be Oliver come back."

"Oliver Calvert won't come back here in a hurry, aunty. I've given him something to do that will take him away a long and weary week or he'll forget it."

"What does thee mean, Helen?"

"Never mind, aunty, till we see who the visitor is. I hear him in the— Why, uncle Harvey, is it you? How glad I am to see you!"

And Helen hugged the old gentleman with effusion, for he was the only father she had known since she was two years old.

"How does thee do, Harvey? Thee looks tired and worn," said aunt Mary, sympathetically, as he sunk into a large cane rocker without saying anything.

"I am both, Mary," was the low answer.

"Where is Oliver?"

"He left us several days ago to see about his business at Pittsburg, Friend Harvey. Was thee in those dreadful riots, too?"

"Yes, Mary. When did he say he'd be back?"

He looked preoccupied and as if he had forgotten all about the riots, and the old lady answered, hastily:

"He said nothing. Has thee not seen him?"

"Not since the round-house night. Did he not tell you how we were separated there?"

"Yes, I believe he did. But Helen knows where he's gone, don't thee, Helen?"

"Me, aunt! How should I know?"

"Why, thee said—"

Aunt Mary stopped, Quaker though she was, for she saw Helen behind the Senator's chair making motions for silence, and even a Quakeress does not cease to be a woman and secretive by nature.

Being a Quakeress, aunt Mary would have scorned to tell a lie even of the whitest description; but, being a woman, she changed the conversation by asking:

"And was thee really taken prisoner by the rioters, Friend Harvey? How did thee escape? Was thee in great danger?"

"Oh, never mind, Mary," he answered, wearily. "It's not worth the telling. I've seen a good deal in Pittsburg that has changed my mind as to the rights of the rich against the poor. It's bad to see babies killed with musket-bullets. Don't talk of it, please. I deserved all the danger I ran into. Helen, have you any idea where Oliver is now?"

"No, sir," she answered, steadily.

"I'm sorry. I want to see the boy very much indeed."

He drooped his head on his hand as if in thought, and sat looking at the carpet in silence.

Aunt Mary, who was nothing if not hospitable, softly slipped from the room in search of Rebecca, to procure something for the Senator, and then Helen went to his side, leaned over his chair and asked in her gentlest tones:

"What is it, uncle Harvey? Tell me, dear, won't you?"

The old man turned a pale and weary-looking face toward her.

"Helen," he said, "I begin to find I'm growing old."

"Yes, dear? Well, that's nothing. We all do that."

"I saw something in Pittsburg that has haunted me ever since."

"And what was that, dear?"

"It was a little boy, a ragged, curly-headed, bare-legged mite, not four years old. He had been shot through the heart by a ball as big as his own poor little fist, which left a great red ragged hole in his breast; and there he lay, staring up at the sky with his glazed eyes, just as—"

The old man stopped and shuddered violently.

Helen waited for his emotion to subside, and then asked:

"Just as what, dear?"

The Senator nearly gasped, as he said in a hoarse low tone:

"Just as Harvey did when he had that fall as a child."

He hid his face in his hands a moment more, and something very like a sob escaped him. When he looked up again he was much calmer.

"You heard of that? He was only four years old, and fell out of a window. They took him up for dead, all covered with dirt. I swear to you, Helen, that dead child made me think of Harvey, for the first time in years. I couldn't get the face out of my mind night or day, and it's been with me ever since."

Again he stopped and seemed to be ruminating whether to say more. The proud old man was evidently much broken by his experience at Pittsburg.

At last he faced round on her with the abrupt question:

"Helen, do you remember Jacqueline Raynaud?"

A crimson flush swept over the girl's face at the suddenness of the inquiry, and she stammered:

"Yes, of course."

He was too much preoccupied to notice her blush in the darkened room, as he answered:

"Well, I saw her in Pittsburg. She's gone on the stage and become a dancer."

Helen almost held her breath to hear what was coming next.

The Senator was not looking at her. He was staring absently at the corner of the room, as if recalling some picture to his memory, and drop-

ping his sentences in short, abrupt jerks, from time to time.

"I went behind the scenes to her room, and met her face to face," he said, presently.

"Yes, dear?" Helen put in, softly.

"Yes. She pretended not to know me."

"Not to know you?"

"Yes. She had grown handsomer than ever she thought of being as a girl; in fact, she's wonderfully beautiful. Ah! I could have forgiven the boy, if he had not seduced her and robbed his father."

Again he paused a little, and when he resumed his voice was more tranquil.

"If I had not recognized Jacqueline unmistakably, her assurance would have staggered me. She pretended to think I came there at a lover, and though I asked her again and again where was Harvey, she laughed at me."

"Did she, dear? That was very rude."

"But she said something that made me feel I'd deserved it all, to the effect that if I'd looked after my own boy, I might not be hunting for him now. Something about her made me suspect he must be near her, and I hunted all over the city in a sort of hope of discovering the boy; but in vain."

"Well, dear, what shall we do?"

"I don't know, Helen. I want to see the boy. I want to ask him face to face, 'Harvey, did you steal those bonds?' If he says 'Yes' I believe it will kill me, but the boy won't suffer by it. I've destroyed my will."

"I don't know that I understand you, uncle."

"Well, after he went away in that mysterious manner, I made a will, leaving all I had to Oliver on condition that he could induce you to marry him—"

"He marry me?" interrupted Helen, excitedly. "Uncle! What right?" She stopped, panting, with all the anger of an insulted woman; but the Senator only waved his hand wearily as he answered:

"Never mind now, Helen. There was no constraint on you. If he could not fulfill the conditions, the money would have gone to you. You would have enjoyed your old home in any event. I did not mean to be cruel to any one."

As the old man let fall these words in the same matter-of-course way, Helen's anger turned to gratitude, and she said:

"You were very kind, dear; but I could not have taken it. I should have given it back to—"

"To whom, Helen?"

Her face flushed again in the darkened room as she answered:

"To him that has a right to it."

The old Senator nodded his head slowly. "You were always a good girl. I would to Heaven he had fancied you, instead of running after that French Gipsy, with her waxy grace and languishing eyes. But it's no use fretting now. I've learned that will, Helen, and shall not make another."

"Well, and what does that mean, uncle Harvey?"

"Only that I shall die intestate, and Harvey will inherit all I have. I suppose he doesn't deserve it, but I can't find it in my heart to be hard on the boy, no matter what he does."

There was a short silence in the room and then Helen observed:

"Harvey would rather have his character cleared than inherit all your money; if he is like the boy I remember."

The Senator sighed heavily.

"I fear there's no way to clear it, Helen. The evidence was too clear and overwhelming. Do you think I, his father, who loved him as my own soul, would have disowned him as I have, had he not hurt and disgraced me in my tenderest point? To think that a boy of mine should be a thief and seducer! Ah well, let it pass, let it pass. I shall not feel it long."

He sunk his face between his hands as if in deep dejection, and just at that minute aunt Mary came in with Rebecca, the single servant of the house, the latter bearing a tray of cool lemonade and ices which attested the comforts of the Quaker household in July.

At a silent signal from the old lady, Rebecca set down the tray and retired, when Helen, with a beating heart, and feeling very much as if she were facing a dangerous bull in a lonely field, said aloud:

"Aunt Mary, uncle and I have just been talking about poor Harvey."

The old lady colored up to the roots of her white hair, and cast an apprehensive glance at the Senator. She was evidently frightened by Helen's temerity.

"Has thee?" she asked, in a tremor.

"Yes, aunty. And uncle insists that Harvey stole from him and ran away with Jacqueline Raynaud, while I say that I don't believe Harvey ever could have done any such thing. He was too noble a fellow."

Aunt Mary looked timidly at the old Senator, who still sat gloomily in his chair, looking at the ground, and observed:

"Indeed, he was always a truthful boy. Don't thee think so, Friend Harvey?"

The old man looked up at her and answered in his chair.

"Do you want to hear all about it?" he asked.

"You'll be able to say nothing in his defense."

after I've told you. I warrant you. God help us all! there's nothing to be said for him. Do you think if there was I'd not have urged it, long ago?"

The feelings of the poor father were evidently not to be shared by his listeners; but his listeners kept silence and presently he began his story.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SENATOR'S STORY.

"You all remember Harvey," said the Senator, slowly. "It seems to me sometimes he has never grown to be a man at all."

"When I hear his name, I always remember a little toddling boy in skirts, with curly hair and dark eyes. It requires an effort to think of him as growing up."

"That boy was to me more than a son. He was not only my other self; but all that was left me of poor Julia, your cousin, Mary."

"You know she was subject to heart disease; and when they brought in the little fellow, that day he fell out of the window, she thought he was dead, and the shock killed her."

"I seemed at one stroke to have lost all that was precious in life, for we never thought the child would recover from the fall."

"However, time heals all things; Harvey lived and grew strong and well again, and I was happy in him."

"Oh how I loved that boy! He was so handsome and spirited, so strong and active, so quick to learn, so generous and—"

The old man stopped, with a breaking voice. The father was triumphant in his sorrow over the narrator.

After a little he resumed.

"You both knew him after he grew up; but perhaps don't know how he really brought down the Raynaud inheritance."

"The father was Harvey's father at college, and when he died all on a sudden, Harvey undertook to protect the orphan girl. He wrote to me, telling me the whole story, in his impulsive, warm-hearted way; how old Raynaud had married a Spanish Gipsy girl for love, and how he had educated his only child to be a wonderful singer, musician and dancer, while her French accent was perfect."

"The end of all was that he begged me to take poor Jacqueline into our house as Helen's governess in French and Spanish."

"Little did I dream of the vile uses to which he would put my weakness in the matter, to our disgrace."

"Well, Jacqueline came, and you know what followed."

"Indeed I don't, uncle Harvey," said Helen, sharply. "All you've told—except about Harvey's letter—I know, but what followed is just what I don't know at all. All I know is that one morning Jacqueline left the house to go to the station, at a time when Harvey and Oliver were both away; that I never saw her again; that you went away in a great hurry next day and came back with Oliver; that you sent for me and laid your orders on me never to mention the name of either Harvey or Jacqueline again. You told me Harvey had stolen a great deal of money from you and had run away with Jacqueline; and that's all I've heard till now. Now then, uncle Harvey, what followed?"

He sighed heavily.

"I may as well go over the whole of the story while I'm at it. What I said was true."

"Here are the proofs."

"One day, soon after Harvey had gone off to college, the graduating class, I made the discovery that my safe had been robbed."

"Burglars could not have done it, because there were no signs of violence. It had been opened with my key, by some one who knew the combination."

"The manner and extent of the robbery pointed in the same direction. A single package of thousand dollar U. S. bonds had been taken from a number of similar packages, that filled a compartment of the safe, and the rest had been put back so that I should not have found the fraud had I not counted the packages."

"Then I began to consider."

"Whoever took those bonds knew the arrangement of my safe and the combination of my lock."

"Who knew these things?"

"Only two people besides myself."

"And those two were my son and my nephew, Oliver."

"They knew where I kept the key, and I had trusted both of them with the last combination I had used."

"The package stolen contained a hundred bonds."

"Either Oliver or Harvey had robbed me of a hundred thousand dollars."

"Those were the bald facts that stared me in the face when I counted those packages and found one missing."

As the old man sat silent for a minute or more Helen asked:

"And which of the two did you first suspect, uncle?"

Senator Calvert sighed heavily.

"Oliver, of course. I knew his road had been in trouble about some defalcations in the accounts of one of their cashiers; and I own that at first my suspicions went in his direction. It seemed to be impossible that my own boy, who had been brought up as I had, should seem the soul of all that was open and manly, would stoop to such pitiful meanness."

"But I was doomed to be convinced against my will."

"Helen, I wronged Oliver at that moment by my suspicions, and it has been my study, ever since, to atone for my injustice. He, poor fellow, was innocent as a babe, and a noble proof he gave me of the integrity of his character."

"You shall hear all."

The Senator could not see the expression of Helen's face, on account of the fan she was holding before her, else he might have wondered at the contemptuous smile which crossed it as he eulogized Oliver, and have wondered whether it was meant for himself perchance. He paused a little to collect his thoughts and then went on:

"Of course, my first idea was to find out what bonds were gone; and, with this object, I looked in another part of the safe for the paper list containing the numbers."

"To complete my suspicions, the list was gone!"

"Then I could not doubt who had done this thing."

"I sat down patiently and took a list of all the bonds that were left, with a view to discover if they followed a regular order. My memory told me that part were in a series and part consisted of odd and broken numbers."

"I said nothing to any one but locked myself up in my study, engaged at this work, which took all that day."

"When I had counted them over, I found that the remaining regular series was quite complete. The list had taken a part of the broken series, and I had no means of telling which."

"When I had made the list complete I went to dinner, and then heard for the first time that Miss Raynaud had left the house in the morning and had not come back."

"It was then dark."

"I was a little vexed at her imprudence in staying out so late, but thought no more of it save to resolve to give her a scolding when she came back."

"But, as you know, she never came back."

"Instead of that, came a boy from Calverton Station with a note from her, in which she coolly told me she had become tired of her place, and had left it to be married to a person near and dear to me, who had thought best to make it a secret till it was all over, as he was dependent on me."

"This note, taken in connection with the robbery, quite staggered me. Only one person who was dependent on me could marry Jacqueline, and that was Harvey. I imagined that, boy-like, he had thought it romantic to elope; and I had sufficient proof of the passionate, intriguing nature of Jacqueline to know that the boy would be as wax in her hands."

"But still, I did not connect the two things together."

"I had no idea that the bond robbery was a prelude to the elopement."

"I said nothing to you, Helen, because you were a young girl; but I hurried off to Boston and Cambridge the very next day."

"I was so concerned about my son that I forgot all about my loss in money. I fairly trembled with anxiety all the way, for four I should be too late to keep Harvey from being the tool of a designing Gipsy adventuress, as I called Jacqueline in my anger."

"And yet, I was too late."

"When I reached the college and hunted up Harvey's tutor, I found to my dismay that the boy had left the place without reporting his absence to any one, and had been gone three days."

"Then I was thunderstruck indeed."

"Where had my boy gone, and how should I find him?"

"In my anxiety, I still forgot all about the robbery, and naturally thought first of Oliver, as my best assistant in the search."

"I hurried to Philadelphia, where I found him just as much amazed as myself. He would not believe that Harvey had fled at first."

"I showed him Jacqueline Raynaud's letter, and he admitted that it looked as if she had induced Harvey to run away with her, in hopes of obtaining my forgiveness by giving me the irrevocable to confront."

"But Harvey was still under age; and no minister or justice would marry the couple unless they committed perjury."

"Then, while I was talking to Oliver about the elopement, I suddenly remembered the robbery, and resolved to test him."

"Therefore I told him that I had lost the paper with the figures of my safe lock combination; had entirely forgotten the numbers; and had come to ask him if he had any recollection of them, so that I could get into my own safe."

"With perfect calmness he went to his desk, looked through a memorandum-book, and

showed me the numbers in a cipher of his own."

"He was not in the slightest degree flurried and read them out with perfect correctness. Had he pretended to have forgotten, I should have been sure to have detected him; but his innocence was too apparent for me to doubt him then."

"I said nothing directly about the loss of the bonds, but I plied him with questions that if he had been guilty he never would have been able to answer without confusion. Among other things, I asked him if he had a list of my bonds. I had a sort of memory that I had once made several copies and given him one to put in his safe."

"He thought an instant, then went to the very place and handed me the list."

"I compared it with the one I had just made, and found the missing hundred numbers marked as 'Package 25.'"

"I pointed out this to him and watched him closely as I said:

"'Oliver, this hundred is missing.'"

"He started up in his chair, turning pale."

"Missing! Impossible! No one could have got the combination here, for they don't know my private cipher. Did any one else know the numbers?"

"'Naturally not Harvey,' I said, and then he started and said not another word on the subject, save to ask me if I wanted to get some of the railway detectives to work on the case."

"I told him not about the robbery but they might try about the elopement."

"He promised to let me know as soon as possible, and that very evening I was waited on by a man in plain dark clothes, who told me he had found the runaways."

"They were both in Baltimore, where they were spending money in the most reckless style, the woman being a stage dancer, while the young man was drunk all the time."

"Now utterly broken-hearted at the news, I took the next train to Baltimore along with the detective. He promised to show me the house where they lived."

"He did so only too faithfully. In a side street of questionable reputation, lights shone from behind closed shutters through the chinks, music was sounding from the parlor; and into this house—into this house—I saw—"

He stopped as if gasping for air.

"What did thee see?" asked aunt Mary, whose curiosity was fairly roused at last.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SENATOR'S STORY CONCLUDED.

"INTO that den of infamy I saw a man and a woman enter. The woman was Jacqueline Raynaud, the man was—my son."

He sunk his head down between his hands, as if utterly prostrated; and both his auditors were silent as death, looking at each other with scared white faces.

At last aunt Mary ventured to ask:

"Is thee sure it was Harvey with her? Is thee sure it was a wicked house?"

"The detective knew the house, and I knew my son," was the reply, in a hollow tone. "But that was not all, or I might have doubted yet. My son had gone into that company in a moment of folly, never dreaming of what will be the consequences. Besides, I could not reconcile this place with the avowal in Jacqueline's note that she was going to be married, and I determined to be sure of what I was doing."

"My influence was great with the chief of police, and he, of an hour from the time I saw my son enter that house the doors were forced, and every person found was arrested."

"When the people inside saw the uniforms of the police they were stricken with terror, and some of the men tried to escape by jumping out of the windows in rear. A few did so, and Harvey must have been one of them, for he was not found in the house."

"Jacqueline was in her room, all dressed as if for going out in the street, and when the police came in at the door she shot three of them with a little pocket-revolver and tried to escape."

"Luckily for the men, it was winter, and their thick clothing and the small caliber of the bullet saved their lives, only one of the shots inflicting a serious wound, though all three were full in the middle of the breast."

"The girl was arrested and her room searched. Part of the missing bonds were found in her trunk, with a quantity of jewelry, and a portrait of my son!"

"After that, I had no more doubt."

"I instructed the police not to press the case, and Jacqueline was allowed to escape."

"What did I care for the bonds or her, then? I had lost my son."

"Had he even married her, I could have forgiven him; but it was but too clear that he had enticed her away to lead a life of infamy, after robbing me."

"I went back to Philadelphia to see Oliver, and told him all I had seen. To my surprise he admitted that he had known of the elopement all along, but not of the robbery."

"Harvey had made a confidant of him, and

had told him all about his intrigue with Jacqueline, and how they were going to deceive me."

Here Helen interrupted him, with flashing eyes. "I don't believe a word of it. What you saw, you saw, uncle; but I don't believe Harvey Calvert ever made a confidant of Oliver. He didn't like him well enough."

The Senator looked surprised but made no comment, and instead, resumed his story.

"I went back to the college, and there was Harvey, come back. I walked straight to his rooms and found them all confusion. And he, my son, unshaven and pale, weary looking and haggard, was the most confused of all when I stood in the doorway.

"Guilt was in every line of his face. He flushed and paled, his lips parted as if he were panting for breath. For the first time in his life he was afraid of me, his own father, who would have shed my blood, drop by drop, to the last to make him happy."

"He was stooping over a trunk as I came in, and seemed to be unpacking something. As I looked at him he rose up, faced me, trembling all over, and let fall from his hands a package of papers back into the trunk.

"I said not one word. I stood in the doorway and looked at him. I recognized in that package part of my missing bonds.

"He, too, seemed unable to speak for a moment; but at last he smiled a sort of writhing curl of his white lips, and whispered:

"You here, sir? I beg your pardon. How you startled me! Are they all well at home?"

"I went forward, still saying nothing, to where he stood by the trunk.

"To my surprise he interposed before it and slammed down the lid.

"Then at last I spoke.

"Harvey," I said, "I want to see that package you just dropped. Open your trunk."

"He turned whiter than ever and answered, in a husky voice:

"Please excuse me, sir. I cannot do it, in honor."

"Harvey," I said, and I well remember how my heart beat as if it would stifle me, "I have lost something which you may have packed by mistake in your trunk. Open it, my boy, in God's name. Don't force me to command you."

"I cannot do it, sir," was all the answer he made me. "My honor is compromised."

"Then I felt it was all over, and my anger rose at his brazen effrontery in talking of honor.

"Harvey," I said, "my safe has been robbed by a person who knew the lock combination. I have lost a hundred thousand dollars. Only you and Oliver knew the combination. I saw you drop a package of bonds as I stood in the doorway here. Stand aside from that trunk."

"As before, he only said:

"I cannot do it, sir. I entreat you not to ask me."

"I do not ask you, now," I said. "I order you, as my son, to stand aside from that trunk."

"He turned so white I thought he was going to faint, and only answered a third time:

"I cannot do it in honor, sir."

"What could I do then, Mary? Helen, what could I do?"

"Nothing short of descending to a personal struggle with my only son would have given me access to that trunk, unless I called in the authorities and proclaimed my own disgrace. He would have resisted me, even to the extent of violence. I saw it in his pale, desperate face.

"Then I knew he was guilty.

"I tried one last effort. Standing there, as he did, overwhelmed with disgrace, he seemed to me more and more like his dead mother.

"Harvey," I said, "tell me only that you did not steal those bonds and seduce Jacqueline Raynaud. I have tracked your movements to Baltimore; I saw you enter that house with her; I found part of the stolen bonds in her trunk when I set the police on the house; I know you have the other bonds in that trunk behind you; but I will disbelieve all I see and hear and know, if you will only tell me you are innocent in all this matter."

"He made me no answer; but I could see the sweat run down his forehead in great beads, and he trembled perceptibly.

"Harvey," I said again, and the sweat ran down my own face in my agony; "by the memory of your dead mother, I conjure you to say you are innocent."

"You see, Mary, my foolish love had brought me so low that I pleaded to him to tell me a lie to cover my self-respect."

The Senator, whose face was ghastly pale as he described the scene with his son, wiped his brow with his handkerchief and hastily swallowed a glass of water. Then he went on:

"He trembled more than ever, but would not say a word.

"Then I turned and went to the door, where I paused.

"From henceforth," I said, "we are strangers to each other. If you have any remnant of decency, you will cease to use my name. The money you have stolen will support you awhile. I shall never ask for it, or mention you again, save as dead."

"He only bowed in answer as I went out.

"On the stairs I turned and looked back. He was standing, as if in deep thought, looking at the trunk which contained the evidence of his crime. He did not cast one look after me, his father, whose heart he had broken.

"From that day till now I have never seen him."

As the Senator concluded his story, there was a deep silence in the room, which lasted till he gulped down some more water, as if he felt choked with heat and thirst.

Then he turned to Helen and said, with a faint smile:

"You're a good girl, Helen, to think well of your cousin; but even you have no word for him now. I told you there was no possibility of defending him after you had once heard all the facts."

Aunt Mary, who had been in tears during the latter part of the narrative, here sobbed out:

"Oh, brother, it does not seem to be possible that father and son should be parted thus. Can't thee think of some way to bring back this wanderer to the fold?"

Helen had not said a word, and the old man turned to her, with a sort of complaining tone:

"Why don't you say something, Helen, you that were so confident?"

"Because," she answered, steadily, "I am not yet prepared. When I am, I will speak, uncle. Have you never heard from Harvey, since?"

"Only through others. He left the college next day and took his name off the books. Where he went, no one knew. I received, some weeks later, through the Adams Express, the missing bonds, all but five, in a package, with an unsigned note, in his handwriting, saying:

"The rest is spent. Try to think as kindly of me as you can. I cannot say more in honor to others."

"That was the last I heard, eight years ago, now."

"And what did you think of that note?" asked Helen, in a tone of peculiar meaning.

"It angered me afresh," answered the old man, sharply. "It was an insinuation that some one else had stolen the bonds."

"And how do you know they had not?" demanded Helen, with equal sharpness.

"Because I had the evidence of my own eyes and ears," retorted the old Senator, whose fiery temper rose at a spice of contradiction. "It could not have been Oliver, or he would have shown more confusion, whereas he was evidently ignorant of the whole affair. I saw part of the bonds in Jacqueline's trunk, part in the other trunk at college; and he sent them back to me in the hope of propitiating me, I suppose. As if I cared for the money, compared with his honor!"

"I see you have made up your mind," observed Helen, quietly, with a spice of sarcasm in her voice. "So anything I might say would be useless, uncle Harvey."

"Eh, what, useless?" said the old man, eagerly, in a tone that showed how his heart was still with his erring son. "No, no, child; speak out all you like. What would you say?"

"Simply this. Harvey Calvert never stole those bonds."

"Why not, why not? What do you mean, child?"

"I mean he never stole those bonds; that's all."

"But how can you prove it, Helen?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Don't know?"

"No, sir."

"Then what do you mean?"

"I mean that Harvey never stole those bonds, uncle."

"Bless my soul, Helen, don't be a parrot, repeating one phrase all the time. I suppose then, he never ran away with Jacqueline?"

"No, sir, he never did."

"Then who did, wisest of ladies?"

"I can't say, sir."

"Why not?"

"Because it is only a belief, and I don't care to state it. But all the same, uncle Harvey, your son never disgraced you. Make up your mind to that, and you'll find it true."

Her tone was so confident that the Senator looked at her with surprise, and at last said:

"Prove that to me and I'll leave all my fortune to you."

"Done!" cried the girl, jumping up excitedly from her seat.

The old man stared at her in utter amazement as she went on rapidly:

"I don't believe Harvey was guilty; and before I've done I'll prove it to you. All I ask is that you give me *carte blanche* to do as I please for the next three weeks. At the end of that time, I'll show you Harvey's innocence clearly."

"And if you can, I'll make my will in your favor," said the old man, firmly. "I'll not go back on my word. I'd sooner leave the boy an honest beggar than a millionaire with the brand of thief on his forehead."

"Be it so," said Helen. "In three weeks I will claim your promise."

CHAPTER XXVI.

OLIVER VISITS THE COUNTESS.

THE Cachuca Combination was drawing full houses at Philadelphia, having struck the cur-

rent of popular favor, owing to its romantic circumstances at Pittsburgh, skillfully utilized by that enterprising agent, Mr. Trevlac.

That gentleman, bland and imposing, with his glorious chevelure and beard, could be seen patrolling Chestnut and Walnut streets every morning, paying his little visits to the newspaper offices; and in the afternoon the journals bloomed out with flattering notices of the "beauty and grace of the Romany Rancee, the distinguished Countess Cachuca, and her marvelous troupe of desert-born, athletes and figurantes."

Several copies of verses in her praise appeared in the columns of the *Public Daybook*, *Advance* and such like ponderously respectable periodicals; showing that the Countess had become all the rage.

Therefore, no one wondered to see Oliver Calvert in the theater at the Gipsy ballet, when he made his appearance there on the very night they first arrived.

The episode of the riots was already fading away from people's minds, after being a nine-days' wonder, and few cared to find out whether Oliver had or had not been there, or how he had behaved.

To his amazement he found the company playing the same piece he had witnessed in Pittsburgh; the "Gipsy Queen's Revenge," and, as before, the actor who personated the villain was made up to look exactly like himself.

To be sure, Philadelphia was a larger place than Pittsburgh, and he was not so well known; but he could not help knowing that the likeness was perceived, when he saw the papers next morning, which treated of it as a "severe joke on a well-known railway magnate, whose heroism in the late riots was, to say the least, not conspicuous."

Writhing with humiliation at this renewed persecution, and not knowing exactly how to stop it, he hit on the design of going to the theater to see the Countess, whom he had recognized but too well, from the moment when, disguised as "Spunky Jack," she had fired at him in the carriage.

He knew enough of the ways of theatrical people to go in the morning about rehearsal time, and marching up to the box-office, he asked for the Countess.

The young man who was selling tickets that day happened to be none other than Mr. Peter Griengro, and both recognized each other instantly.

Mr. Griengro considered a few moments before he answered.

"Rehearsal's on now. You cannot see her. Mr. Trevlac is in the house."

"And who is Mr. Trevlac?" asked Oliver, who had forgotten the name, only heard once before.

"He's the manager of the show," said Mr. Griengro, politely. "I'll send for him, if you like."

"I don't know that I want to see him," answered Oliver, doubtfully. "Can't I wait till rehearsal's over? I want to see the Countess particularly."

Mr. Griengro smiled somewhat broadly as he replied:

"So do a great many other people. They send in their cards with little boxes, if they want to see her very much indeed."

"Little boxes! What for?" asked Oliver, wonderingly. "Anything in the little boxes?"

"Yes," was the laconic answer.

"What?"

"Some send rings, some bracelets, some necklaces, some sweet things wrapped up in green-backs."

Mr. Griengro yawned slightly as he finished the list, and looked at Oliver in a sleepy manner.

The railway magnate now thought he understood Mr. Griengro's drift. He pulled out his card and put it inside of a five-dollar bill, which he handed to the imperturbable Gipsy.

But Mr. Griengro did not seem to understand him.

"I am to give her this card and money?" he said, interrogatively.

"No; you are to give her the card and keep the money."

Mr. Griengro became brisk in a moment, and vanished into the house, whence he soon reappeared, saying:

"Step this way. Mr. Trevlac wishes to see you, before he sends for the Countess."

"But I don't want to see Mr. Trevlac," objected Oliver.

"Mr. Trevlac says he must see you before he sends your card to the lady."

"Oh, very well," answered Calvert, a little impatient. "Go ahead, I'll follow."

Mr. Griengro led him into the house up a side staircase, and thence into a beautifully furnished room, with a general aspect of luxury about it, that turned out to be the manager's office.

Here the Gipsy ushered him in, to be greeted by the tall, dark gentleman whom Oliver had seen at Pittsburgh, and whom he recognized instantly.

Calvert halted in the middle of the room, a little nonplused.

He noticed that Mr. Trevlac did not offer to rise to receive him, but lay back in his revolving arm-chair before the desk, looking up at him in a cold, inquiring manner, that was very forbidding.

Oliver Calvert was not, however, the man to be daunted by any coldness, as long as he was in a civilized place. Physical violence appalled him, but he had any amount of moral audacity.

He took a seat, therefore, with a coolness all his own, and said:

"This is Mr. Trevlac, I suppose?"

"The same, sir."

"Manager of this company?"

"Yes, sir."

"I wish to see the Countess Cachuca."

"With what purpose, sir?"

"I can only tell that to herself, sir."

"Then I fear you cannot see her."

"Why not?"

"Because she is engaged."

"At rehearsal, I suppose. Very well, I can wait till it is over."

"Not in this room, sir."

"Thank you. I don't wish to. But I am determined to see the Countess."

"And she is equally determined not to see you."

Oliver felt his temper rising at the cool sarcasm of the other's tone.

"How do you know that? Do you know who I am?" he asked, all his pride of purse swelling in his voice and figure as he rose.

Mr. Trevlac smiled.

"Perfectly well. You are Oliver Calvert; nephew and supposed heir of the Hon. Harvey Calvert, State Senator; President of the Air-Line Road, and colonel, aide-de-camp on the Governor's staff. Have I described your titles correctly?"

"Then, sir," retorted the railway magnate, frowning on the other, "you ought to know that I am not the person to be treated with insolence by the manager of a variety show."

"Exactly," was the calmly insolent reply.

"Nor is Mr. Calvert the person to try and force himself into the presence of one of my actresses, when I tell him she won't see him."

"But I tell you I *must* see her," exclaimed Oliver, angrily. "She and her crowd of tramps keep on trying to make me ridiculous before all the people, and I want it stopped."

Mr. Trevlac laughed slightly.

"She has nothing to do with that," he said. "She acts the part she's cast for, and gets her money for it."

"Then who is responsible for this outrage?" asked Oliver.

Mr. Trevlac smiled and tapped his breast with his forefinger.

"You?"

"Myself. Have you any remarks to make on the subject?"

Oliver stared at him in amazement.

"Why, what have you against me? I never saw you in all my life, before I met you in Pittsburg."

"Are you sure of that?" asked Trevlac, keeping his dark eyes fixed on those of Oliver, who stared at him harder than before.

"I think not," responded Calvert, after a pause for consideration. "You seem to know me, and to have studied me long enough to counterfeit my face and form, but who *you* are, I know no more than a baby. What have I done to you that you should persecute me thus?"

Mr. Trevlac rose, and the sneering smile which had marked him during their interview left his face.

"You asked me that question once before at Pittsburg," he said. "I told you then that you should know in proper time. That time is coming fast. Do you know me yet?"

"How should I know you?" asked Oliver, snappishly. "You talk in some species of riddle I am too lazy to try and unravel."

"Very good," said Trevlac, calmly. "I suppose you know the Countess?"

Oliver flushed ever so little.

"Yes, I know her."

"Pray, who is she, then?"

"Her true name is Jacqueline Raynaud. She ran away from my uncle's house seven years ago, and was traced to a house of questionable reputation in Baltimore, where she was found in possession of a number of bonds that had been stolen from his safe."

"Who traced her there?" asked Trevlac, sharply.

"One of my detectives, if you want to know particularly."

"What became of him afterward? Where is he now?"

Oliver looked surprised at the rapid questioner, and unguardedly replied:

"He got into trouble."

"Just so; with the sheriff," retorted the other, bitterly. "That's the sort of men you have for detectives; thieves out of a profitable job. His name was Barlow."

"Who in Heaven's name are you that take so much interest in my affairs?" asked Oliver, angrily.

"You'll find out in time," was the enigmatical answer. "Suffice it that I am the friend of Jacqueline Raynaud, and that you have

wronged her. You ask why we persecute you? I will tell you. We began, and will go on, till you execute justice, and right the wrong you alone can right."

Oliver drew himself up and looked a model of dignity.

"I am unable to understand you, sir," he said. "I have wronged no one that I am aware of; and if you wait till I move in this matter, you may wait a long time."

"Perfectly true," said Trevlac, blandly; "and that is the reason we continue to show you your coming fate on the stage. It takes hard thrusts to pierce a rhinoceros's hide, Oliver Calvert."

"Then I am to understand that you mean to persevere in this outrage?" asked Oliver, putting on his hat.

"If you mean the Gipsy's Revenge Ballet, you are correct. We shall keep it on while it draws."

"And you intend to caricature me every night, too?"

"We call it a portrait; not a caricature. We intend that Mr. Griengro, who takes the character, shall keep the likeness as faithful as possible. I see you shaved off your mustache at the riots. He shall play it clean-shaven to-night."

Oliver turned pale with anger at the calm impudence of the threat.

"And do you suppose that I will stand that?" he demanded.

"How will you stop it?" asked the manager, in the same smiling way.

"By getting an injunction on you, sir," cried the now thoroughly irate Oliver.

"No, you will not."

The retort was cool as ever.

"And why not, pray?"

"Because if you do I shall make a speech to the audience from before the curtain."

"And what will you say?"

"I will read them a few pages from the history of Mr. Oliver Calvert, from the year 1870 to the year 1877, with disquisitions on the management of railroads and manipulations of the stock market. Does that touch you, Mr. Calvert?"

Oliver sneered openly.

"What do you know about my affairs? I defy you to say anything you can prove against me as regards stocks. Go ahead."

"That does not touch you, I see. Very well, then, suppose we try a little chapter about combination locks on safes, and how to use them. Would that hit any nearer the mark?"

Oliver's face whitened perceptibly, and he said nothing, as Trevlac pursued:

"I'm told some people are not safe to be trusted with the combination of a lock. If a few burglars get hold of them, it can be scared right out of them. I wonder whether it wouldn't do to put Peter Griengro into a colonel's uniform, and have a scene in the ballet representing Pittsburg riots, with the colonel running for his life."

Oliver could stand this open raillery no longer, and turned to leave the room. At the door he paused.

"Mark my words, Mr. Trevlac," he said, "I neither know nor care who you are; but this I know, that I'll stop your show to-night, or my name's not Calvert."

Mr. Trevlac only laughed.

"Try it, if you dare."

Then Oliver vanished in dudgeon.

Hardly had he gone when the Countess Cachuca walked in at a side door, exclaiming:

"I heard it all. What do you think, now?"

"Just what I did before, Jacko. Bluster is all very well, but he keeps on his guard all the time. We shall never surprise his secret."

"And I say we shall," she retorted. "You failed, being a man. It's my turn to try, now. I've cause enough, God knows."

And Jacqueline laughed bitterly.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MR. BARLOW'S LITTLE GAME.

OLIVER CALVERT marched away from the door of the theater swelling with schemes of vengeance. He had made up his mind to fight, and took his way straight toward the office of his counsel to prepare for an injunction on the theater.

He had to walk some distance up Chestnut street, and while he was nearing Mr. Jackman's office he became aware of some one who was following him, and endeavoring, in a covert manner, to attract his attention.

As soon as he became conscious of this, he turned to face the new-comer, and realized at once that he was a vagabond of some sort.

Not that the stranger was either ragged or hungry-looking; on the contrary, he was dressed in a suit of black, with the shiniest of new hats, and sported a gorgeous pin in the black satin scarf that covered his shirt-front, if he had any, which was uncertain.

But there were several things in his make-up which suggested the idea that he was not among the recognized members of respectable society.

His black clothes were very dusty, looking as if he had come from the country on foot, and the huge boots he wore were innocent of blacking.

There was, moreover, a furtive, sneaking look about his face, like that of a cat in a strange garret, which showed that the stranger did not rightfully belong either to the city or his clothes.

No sooner had Oliver turned his face toward this personage, than the other, seeming to take courage, stole softly up alongside and began, in an apologetic sort of way:

"Don't want to disturb ye, boss; but, fact is, I'm jest about busted, and haven't had a square meal of vittles sence yestidday mornin'."

"Well," answered Oliver, coldly, "I've no change to spare, at present."

And he walked on.

His follower, to his surprise, came up beside him, making step for step, and went on speaking as if he had received no repulse.

"Don't want to beg any change, boss; but, fact is, I do want a square meal, Mr. Calvert."

"Who the devil are you, anyway?" asked Oliver, facing round angrily at the sound of his own name.

He took a closer look at the features of the stranger, red and bloated with sun and dissipation, and did not seem to be able to tell who he was.

The stranger grinned under his tangled and matted beard.

"Guess you've furgot me, boss," he answered, coolly. "Best come in out of the sun, if you want to talk to me. Here's one of them nice little parks as we're so proud of in Philadelfy. I likes to sit in the shade hot days."

Something, he could hardly say what, induced Oliver Calvert to follow his unprepossessing guide into the cool, shady square, where the seats were covered with strolling tramps who had strayed into Philadelphia since the suppression of the riots.

The strange man in dusty black stalked in, swinging his arms in an independent fashion, very different from that he had shown while in the street, and threw himself on a vacant bench.

"Set down, boss, set down," he said, patronizingly. "I thought you didn't rightly remember me, Mr. Calvert. My name's Barlow, and I used to be a private detective in your company. That's what's the matter."

Mr. Barlow—for it was none other than the Boss of the Bummers—threw his arm over the back of the seat, drummed with his fingers and stared hard at Oliver, as who should say: "Now, then, I think you'll be civil."

Oliver Calvert, who had remained standing, leaning on his cane, turned a little paler when he heard the name and saw the defiant manner of the tramp.

"Well, Barlow," he said, "I didn't know you. You've changed greatly."

"I have," was the frank answer. "I hain't shaved for three years, nor slept in a house sence they let me out of jail. You know what I went there for, and who was to blame."

Oliver hurriedly put his hand in his pocket as he said:

"Well, Barlow, I'm sorry to see you in this plight on account of old associations. You were a pretty good detective in old times. Take this, and get something to eat."

He slipped a crumpled bill into the grasp of the tramp, who stealthily pocketed the money so that his comrades could not see it, in case they were watching his interview with the well-dressed Oliver.

But his manner was as coolly defiant as ever as he remarked:

"Very good, indeed, boss; but I ain't arter the casual biz, jest now. I wants a steady job. You don't want a private *sucereetery* now, I s'pose? I could fill that place amazin' well."

Oliver looked at him with eyes that began to flash, while he shut his teeth tight.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean that I've found out several things sence I were in Grubstip, as I didn't know afore. I seen the chap they calls Spunk, Jack fire at ye, that time, and I kin tell ye *who he is*, too. I'm jest in that sort of elegant position that if one party don't want to come to my terms, I kin go to the other and make a clean breast of all I know."

He spoke the last words with a peculiar emphasis, staring straight into Oliver's eyes all the time.

Calvert flushed with anger and shame as he looked at him, and then he shook his finger at the tramp.

"Hark ye, Mr. Barlow," he said, in a low tone, "you don't know me yet. I had pity on you, remembering you to have once been in the service of our company, but I remember that you were sent to the penitentiary for burglary six years ago, and that your word is not worth a rush in court. Now do your worst, and take care I don't give you in charge to a policeman, if you follow me any more."

He turned on his heel and was leaving the square, when Mr. Barlow called after him:

"Say, Mr. Calvert, I seen *your wife* this mornin'."

The hail did as Billy had intended it should do; it stopped the President of the Air Line Road in his tracks.

He came back to the tramp deadly pale, with

a dangerous look on his white face, hissing out:

"What do you mean, you insolent vagabond? Do you want to get into jail again?"

But Billy Barlow had not tackled his former employer with any thought of evading the consequences. They were not in the streets now, and there were none but his own friends, furtive-looking tramps, all round him.

Mr. Barlow accordingly rose up and faced Calvert, looming up as big as the railroad magnate, or larger, and retorted:

"Say, Calvert, I ain't no vagabond, and I want you to take that back. D'ye hear?"

As he spoke he stripped off his coat and turned up the sleeves of a red flannel shirt.

"You'll take that back," he repeated, "or I'll lam you stiff in a minnit. You hear me?"

For a moment Oliver thought of fighting, but when he glanced round him and saw the company he was in, he felt that it would not do, on account of the notoriety that would inevitably come of it.

"I was wrong, Mr. Barlow," he said, hurriedly. "I don't mean to insult you, but you irritated me. Now, what do you want?"

"A steady job," replied Mr. Barlow, laconically, turning down his sleeves and resuming his coat.

"Well, I can put you in as a trackwalker or flagman," observed Oliver, hesitatingly.

"Them's low jobs. I want good pay and less work. Make me a detective again, and you'll be talking," was the sulky reply.

"I'll see about it. But I can't stay talking to you here."

"I'll come to your honor's house any time you say, sir," answered Mr. Barlow, growing insincerely obsequious in a moment.

"I have no house here. I'm in the—in a hotel," said Oliver.

"Then I kin come to the hotel, or meet your honor anywhere you say, sir."

Oliver considered a moment.

"Do you know Fairmount Park?"

"Do I know me own nose? Yes, sir."

"Meet me there this evening at sunset, in the rustic summer-house that stands second from the water-works, and I'll see what I can do."

"I'll be there, your honor."

Then Oliver went off to prepare his injunction against the Cachuca Combination, and Mr. Barlow beckoned to a few of his cronies, who eagerly followed him to the cool seclusion of a beer vault, where they spent the rest of the afternoon in swilling "schooners" of beer at five cents a pint, and tried their best to get gloriously drunk out of Oliver Calvert's five-dollar bill.

Several of them succeeded as well as could be expected, despite the disgust of the bar-keeper, who thought his five dollars dearly earned by the invasion of such a crew; but Mr. Barlow himself was too well seasoned a veteran to be so easily overtaken.

The Boss of the Bummers had not obtained his title without earning it in many a stout debauch, and all the beer in Philadelphia was inadequate to intoxicate him to any appreciable extent.

It took at least a quart of whisky at a sitting to do that job.

Consequently, when Mr. B. turned his pockets inside out, as a genteel signal to his mates that he had spent all his money, he was as steady as a church, and walked off to Fairmount Park, erect and independent in bearing, able to keep to his own side of the pavement.

His brethren in bacchanalism remained behind in the cellar, with the object of beating the establishment out of a few more "schooners," but without success.

Mr. Barlow, pursuing the even tenor of his way, arrived in time at the railway bridge at the end of Market street, where he paused for a little while to enjoy the exhilarating pursuit of spitting into the water.

Then he turned into Fairmount Park, and was making straight for the trysting-place, when he saw before him something that caused him to stop, move aside into a belt of shrubbery, and say softly to himself:

"By Gosh!"

The object that brought this little exclamation from the Boss of the Bummers was nothing else than a girl in a red cloak, with short skirts and bare feet, a regular English Gipsy in appearance, who was tripping merrily along, singing to herself.

This would have been nothing to Mr. Barlow, for he was used to the sight of Gipsies, but for the fact that he remembered both air and voice as those of the same girl who had tricked him so nicely at the Pittsburg riots out of two watches and several hundred dollars of stolen bills.

It was Nan herself, lilting away in a soft voice her favorite Romany gitty (song):

"Me kamava miro kam, miro kone kamlidir;
Miro kone kamlidir kamava man."

She had not seen the Boss of the Bummers, and vengeance took swift possession of his heart as he listened, making him forget for the time all about his meeting with Oliver Calvert.

He followed softly after Nan, keeping on the grass, and gradually catching up with her, glad to see that she was fast getting into the more lonely part of the grounds, where he would not be likely to be disturbed in executing his vengeance.

He did not dare to run at first, for he knew that the Gipsy girl was swift of foot, while he himself was of a lumbering make.

Presently he was not twenty paces behind her, when she heard his step, looked round, saw who it was, and instantly took to her heels like a frightened chicken.

Mr. Barlow started after her with a will, but gave it up as a bad job after a dozen steps, in which time Nan had taken at least twenty.

He saw that he could not hope to succeed on that tack, for the girl had the heels of him all the time.

He slacked up and allowed her to go on, when she in her turn came down to a walk, looked back and called out archly:

"Why, Billy Barlow, is that you? How you scared me!"

"You hain't no cause to skeer that I knows on," replied the Boss, with a grin of amiability that sat ill on his lowering face. "Why don't ye come back and say good-evenin', likes if ye'd had some bringing up?"

"And you won't hurt me?" asked Nan, with affected innocence.

"You looked so savage jest now, I thought you was going to knife me, sure."

"Knife be blowed. Come here, I tell you," retorted Billy, in his most wheedling tones. "I won't hurt ye ('more'n ye deserve,' he muttered, under his breath.) Come along, I say."

Thus urged, Nan allowed him to come close up to her, when he stopped and started violently.

The Gipsy had her arms folded under her cloak, and the glittering muzzle of a little pistol was peeping out of the folds of her mantle, aimed at him.

"Why, Mr. Barlow," said Nan, with her careless laugh. "What ails you? I won't hurt you if you don't hurt me!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

EAVESDROPPING.

MR. BARLOW'S schemes of revenge came to a swift termination at sight of that little tube pointing at his breast, and moreover he was puzzled by the transformation in Nan's face and figure.

When he had seen her in Pittsburg she was a country girl with a frowzy brown wig and a freckled face, now she was his old friend, Gipsy Nan, and he began to doubt her identity.

"Why, Nan," he said, "what are ye p'intin' that thing at me fur? I hain't done ye no harm, have I?"

"I don't intend you shall," was Nan's composed answer. "Do you want to speak to me?"

"Yes," he answered, slowly and dubiously, "I did. What have you done with that rhino of mine and them two tickers?"

Nan smiled satirically.

"Why, Billy Barlow! Have you been getting drunk again?"

"No, I ain't been gittin' drunk at all. You fooled me out of them tickers and flimsies at Grubstip, but I ain't goin' to be fooled twice. You hand 'em over."

Nan began to back out, keeping him covered with the revolver in her hand.

"You're as drunk as a fool now," she protested. "I never saw you in Grubstip or anywhere else, since we left the Wanderer's Home. Keep back, or I'll give you what Spunky Jack gave you, to teach you manners."

"Spunky Jack be darned," he growled. "Do you think I don't know he's a gal? I wouldn't tech him on that account."

"And you don't touch me neither," retorted Nan, fiercely. "Now what do you want with me, you drunken fool?"

"Oh, nothin', if you ain't the gal as stole my tickers; but if you air, or if over I ketches her, I'll rip her into small pieces, so I will."

And Mr. Barlow stuck his hands into his pockets and glared fiercely at the girl, who, on her part, only laughed back her answer.

"Hope you may catch her, Billy. I suppose she took them when you was too drunk to see her."

"I warn't no sich thing," he retorted, sulkily. "I were a little sprung, but as fur bein' drunk, I scorn the idee. Where be you a-goin' now, Nan?"

He tried to be wheedling in his tone, as he closed up, but Nan kept the pistol pointed at him as firmly as before, as she answered:

"Only to attend to a little business of my own, which don't concern nobody else, nohow."

He looked at her sharply a moment, and then turned on his heel with a gruff:

"Good-evenin', then."

"Good evening, Mr. Barlow, and better manners to you, when next you meet a lady," she replied, as coolly as ever, replacing the pistol in her pocket as she spoke.

She watched him go down the path toward the river, and noticed that the sun was just sinking in the west.

Then Gipsy Nan, with the old-time dexterity

of disguise that had served her well so often, slipped into a clump of bushes, put on the shoes and stockings she had been carrying under her cloak with true tramp's impatience of their use in hot weather; let down her skirts; turned her cloak brown side out, and emerged from the other side of the clump a decent and sober working-girl, out for a stroll in the park.

Striking off so as to come on the river at a point high above that which Mr. Barlow had taken, she was shortly joined by a man who had watched her interview with the Boss of the Bummers from a safe distance, quite unseen by the latter.

This man was none other than Mr. Peter Griengro, with a false beard and wig, and a fashionable suit of clothes, swinging his cane with the air of a dandy.

Nan came up and took his arm with easy familiarity, observing:

"*Diulo perdas na jinyum mande*," (the fool of a tramp didn't know me).

"All the better," replied Mr. Griengro, cheerfully, in the same tongue. "He's gone down to meet the Black Lord," (so the Gipsies called Oliver). "I saw the black one go into the arbor, down yonder."

He pointed toward the river bank, about a quarter of a mile away, where the arbor was plainly to be seen, and Nan asked:

"What shall we do?"

"We must find what he's after, for the Rance. She told me to watch the Black Lord day and night; and there he is. Let's go there."

"But, they'll see us," objected Nan.

Mr. Griengro, who was an English Gipsy by birth, and consequently an old poacher, laughed at her.

"Stay here and watch me, or come with me and see what I do," was all he said.

Nan, who was very fond and proud of Peter (for he was her acknowledged lover and she had given him all the money and watches out of which she had tricked Billy Barlow) at once intimated her intention of following him, to which Mr. Griengro made no sort of objection.

They walked openly down to the river, in full view of the occupants of the arbor, if any were there; keeping their distance and turning away in another direction till they had passed a hill which hid them from view, and were close to the water's edge.

Then Mr. Griengro took the cane he was carrying, and improvised a fishing-rod out of it in short order by shooting a couple of joints forward and attaching to the last a fishing-line and hooks, which he produced from his pocket.

Nan laughed at his rig, but Mr. Griengro coolly proceeded to dig for worms with his knife, after which he baited his hook and strolled down to the water's edge.

The river was low at this point and had a cut bank, under the shelter of which Mr. Griengro had no difficulty in advancing, unseen by any one above, pretending to fish all the time, till he came close under the arbor into which he had seen Calvert and Barlow enter.

Nan followed him without any hesitation, keeping close to the bank; and both of them trod so softly that they were unnoticed by the people in the arbor.

As they arrived under it, they heard voices distinctly.

"I told ye I wanted a steady job, and what I says I means."

"Well, Barlow, I've told you that the company has appointed all its men on the detective force for the year, and I have no power unless a vacancy occurs."

"Then make a vacancy."

"I can't do it."

"Why not?"

"Because all the men I have are good men, reliable and steady."

"Put up a job on one of 'em."

"I couldn't do it. Besides, it would do you no good."

"And why not, Mr. Calvert?"

"Because, as soon as the Directors found out who I had appointed, such a pressure would come on me that I'd have to put you out in the cold."

"You mean about the prison affair? Well, you know who got the benefit of that, I s'pose, Mr. Calvert?"

"Hush! Don't talk so loud."

"I'll talk as loud as I've a mind to, Mr. Calvert. You know who got the money for them railway bonds, and who hired me to burn 'em up. I kin split about that job, if you force me to it."

"It wouldn't help you a bit, Barlow, so you might as well talk like a reasonable man. No one would believe you, after seeing the record of your conviction in court."

"Oh! that's your game, is it? You, the man that got the swag, are to be believed, and I ain't, because I've been punished fur doin' your work! That's Pennsylvania justice, is it?"

"It's the law, as you'll find out, if you try on any more threats with me, my man."

Here Mr. Griengro laid down his rod and looked over the edge of the bank.

The tones of voice of the speakers showed they were getting excited.

He overtook her, just after she had passed out of the door in the dark part of the interior passage, and was about to address her when a tall figure started out from a recess in the wall and offered his arm with a bow to the lady.

Oliver smothered a curse under his lips as he turned away.

"That infernal Trevlac again," he muttered, to himself, as he watched the couple walk down the passage and disappear in a corridor that crossed it a little further on.

Then something in the name, for the first time since he had heard it, attracted his attention and made him repeat it over again and again, as he stalked moodily along the corridors to his own room in a distant part of the hotel.

"Trevlac, Trevlac? Where have I ever heard such a name? It sounds as if it were Cornish at first, but the end's French. Trevlac, Trelawney! No, that's not like it. Trevor? No. The 'lac' is French all over, Mersac, Cavaignac, Cornac. I wonder where the fellow can have come from?"

As he spoke, he opened the door of his room and went in. Some one—probably the chambermaid—had put a handsome lithograph of the Cachuca Combination into his room, hung up against the door.

He had seen them in the shop-windows without noticing them closely, but now he was forced to admit that it was a very artistic performance that was put out by the Combination.

The plate represented the Gipsy Queen's Revenge in its moment of triumph, and contained his own portrait, more conspicuous than ever, in the person of the villain crouching at the feet of the queen.

With an angry growl he turned his back and went to the wash-stand, to prepare for the visit to the theater which was to end in stopping the ballet.

As he was washing his hands, he happened to look up into the mirror, and saw the abominable picture still staring him in the face. It seemed as if he could not get rid of it, and he found himself trying to spell out the legend beneath the picture in the mirror, while he was still washing.

It ran thus:

NEEUQ YSPIG

"REGANAM, CALVERT."

He started suddenly, ran back to the print, and read underneath:

"Gipsy Queen.

"Trevlac, Manager."

Then back to the looking-glass, where the name "Calvert" stared out with fatal distinctness.

"My God!" he muttered, "what a fool I've been. Trevlac must be Harvey Calvert himself. He's only spelled his name backwards."

In the midst of his cogitations came a sharp rap at his door.

CHAPTER XXX.

IN THE WINGS.

"COME in," said Oliver, nervously; and into the room stalked Mr. Trevlac himself, *in propria persona*.

Oliver said nothing; for the shock of his discovery was still fresh upon him, and he knew not how to receive his visitor, if he really were Harvey Calvert.

He stared at him as if in the hope of recognizing one feature of the lost young man, but was unable to detect it.

Harvey Calvert had been a thin, pale, consumptive-looking youth, built like a thread of paper, with a downy pair of side-whiskers and large hollow eyes.

This man had the frame of an athlete and the hirsute honors of a Samson.

Therefore Oliver, not knowing what to say, held his peace while he dried his hands and allowed his visitor to take a seat unopposed.

It was Trevlac, who opened the conversation.

"You told me yesterday that you were going to put an injunction on us to-night. Have you changed your mind yet?"

"No—that is—I don't know," was the hesitating reply. "Have you changed the bill?"

"No, sir, and intend to keep it on."

"Very well then. I must stop it."

"You'd better change your mind, Oliver Calvert."

"Why so?"

"Because I hear that your uncle has already changed his."

Oliver started nervously.

"What do you mean?"

"That he has burned his will. You are no longer his heir."

Oliver turned as pale as a ghost.

"How do you know that?"

"He told a friend of mine as much, and the friend told me. Has he not informed you also?"

"No. I saw him only to-day," answered Oliver, in his most agitated tones. "He never let drop a hint of it all."

Mr. Trevlac smiled.

"Perhaps he begins to suspect the truth at last. You might as well make an open confession before it is too late, Oliver. No one else can right the wrongs you have done."

Oliver stared at his visitor with a haggard look.

"Who are you that speak thus?" he asked, huskily.

"I told you that I would let you know when the time came," said Trevlac, quietly. "It may be that it is not necessary now. I think you know me already. Is it not so, Oliver?"

The President of the Air-Line Road moistened his dry lips with his tongue before he could answer in a low tone:

"I think I do. You are Harvey Calvert."

The other shook his head gravely but went on:

"You advertised for Harvey Calvert this afternoon, and one of my ladies in the company went down to see you about it. She said you wanted to see him."

Oliver looked at him in the same haggard way, as if at a loss what to say, and Trevlac continued:

"What do you propose to do? Was that advertisement merely another ingenious plan to forestall the ruin that must come sooner or later, or was it honest?"

"Indeed, Harvey, it was honest," said Oliver, earnestly, and speaking in a manner that exhibited much humility. "I know I didn't treat you well, seven years ago, old fellow, and that you have much reason to be incensed against me; but you know there was no reason why you should not have saved yourself at the time by telling your father—"

"What?" asked Trevlac, as Oliver paused in his smooth flow of words.

"Well, the truth—as much as—"

"What?" asked Trevlac; for Oliver hesitated again.

"As much as he need have known. There was no need of throwing away all your prospects in life for the sake of a woman who—"

"Who did what?" asked Trevlac, in the same deep, passionless tones he had used throughout the interview. "I am curious to hear what she did, according to your story."

"Well, who tried her best to ruin us both, by robbing my uncle's safe. You know she did it, Harvey."

"And who gave her the combination to open the lock?" asked Trevlac.

Oliver flushed as he answered:

"Not I, certainly."

"Whom did she flee to meet?" asked the other, as quietly as before.

"Not me, certainly."

"Who promised to marry her?"

"Not I, certainly."

"Who induced her to send back the stolen bonds?"

"Not—" Oliver paused abashed.

"You are right," answered the visitor, rising. "I see that you are still intrenched in your armor of self. Now talk quick. What do you propose?"

"To take you at once to the Senator; tell him all the story you ought to have told seven years ago; lay the blame on Jacko—it's true, you know, she did steal the bonds; and ask him to let bygones be bygones. He'll do it quick enough, never fear. The old man was a good deal shaken up at the riots, and can't last long. In fact, he's getting into his dotage fast."

"And this is all you have to propose?" asked Trevlac, in a peculiar tone.

"Yes. Isn't it enough? You'll be put back into your proper station, and no one will know but what you've been traveling all these years."

"I have been traveling," replied Trevlac, gravely, "traveling as you never yet traveled, Oliver. But let that pass. What is to become of your wife in all this arrangement?"

"My wife? I have none," cried Oliver, angrily. "What put such an idea into your head?"

Trevlac put on his hat and walked to the door, where he turned, with his hand on the handle, to speak for the last time, saying:

"When you are prepared to do justice to all, I am ready to help you. If you do not make haste others may take the work out of your hands, and then it will be too late. Good-evening."

He left the room as the slowly settling twilight began to pale; and Oliver sat down to ruminate over the plight in which he was left.

The discovery that Trevlac was really his cousin, Harvey Calvert, (though the bearded agent had not admitted as much save by implication, and had even shaken his head when asked if he were not the man) had upset all his calculations about the stopping of the play. He simply did not dare to do what he had threatened.

He possessed certain items of secret knowledge which made him hesitate before the possibility that Harvey Calvert might, as he knew he could, expose him.

Only one thing had saved him from ruin all these years, through such an exposure.

That thing was the word of a gentleman.

Something impalpable; and yet it had proved,

to Oliver's great profit, as powerful as bands of steel to restrain those who should have been his foes from bringing him to open shame.

Would that band break now? He shivered, in spite of the heat, as he thought over the possible consequences if it should.

It might mean to him loss of his post as president (for it was near annual election time); loss of Helen's promised hand; loss of a possible fortune; loss of reputation; loss of everything which had made him enjoy life, so keenly for the last ten years.

As he sat thinking there, the darkness closed in on him and the clocks began to toll the hour of eight, all over the city.

Then he started up, for he suddenly remembered that the marshals would be at the theater to stop the raising of the curtain.

He was as anxious now to stop the injunction, as he had been to stop the play before.

Hastily putting on his hat, away he went to the theater, and arrived there in time to hear a great noise going on inside, from which he realized that the audience were growing impatient at the delay in raising the curtain.

Round to the stage door he went, and found one of the deputy marshals there, whom he passed and went upon the stage.

As he had expected, he found the whole company gathered excitedly round the marshal's posse, while high words were passing.

The marshal had already drawn his pistol and was swearing to shoot any one who interfered with him, while the Gipsies were talking and gesticulating in their excitable way, jabbering Romany to each other, and evidently inclined to try physical conclusions with the law officers.

Mr. Trevlac, the only cool person on the stage, was leaning composedly against one of the wings; while the Countess Cachuca, in her illusion and spangles was pacing up and down near him, with an action that forcibly reminded Oliver of a caged leopard; a simile that was made more striking by her dark, brilliant beauty and lithe motions.

Into this scene of confusion came the President of the Air-Line Road, with the best air of dignity he could put on for the nonce, and the disturbance ceased for a moment.

"Please let the performance go on, Colonel Jones," he said, hurriedly, to the marshal. "I have compromised with the manager of this show, and he has promised to remove the objectionable feature."

"Oh, very well, judge," was the reply, rather sulkily; "if you don't wish to press the matter we can get out, but these Gipsy galoots can't bounce me and my men, I want them to understand, every one of 'em."

Then he put up his pistol, called off his men, and left Oliver alone among the Gipsies, who stared at him with undisguised wonder; for, just at that moment, Mr. Griengro, made up in the most artistic style to present the exact double of Calvert, walked out on the stage and faced him with the remark:

"How de do, brother? We ain't on, in the first scene, and prompter wants stage cleared."

Oliver walked over to where Trevlac still stood, and said, in a low voice:

"Spare me this humiliation at least, if you are the Harvey I remember."

The tall agent made no reply, affecting not even to hear him; but the Countess Cachuca said in Romany something to Griengro, who bowed and left the stage.

Then the prompter's bell sounded; the Gipsies cleared the stage as if by magic; and in another moment Oliver found himself in one of the wings beside the Countess Cachuca, watching the ballet from behind the scenes, while Mr. Trevlac had disappeared into the mysterious regions under the stage.

He tried to say a word here, and began:

"Jacqueline! Why should we be enemies?"

She turned and gave him one flash out of her dark eyes.

"Talking is not allowed behind the scenes," she remarked, coldly. "The stairs are at the side next the prompter."

"I don't want to go out. I want to see and speak to you, Jacqueline," he pleaded, earnestly. "I've wanted it ever since you shot at me. Why should we be enemies?"

She turned her back on him and called out in Romany to Mr. Griengro, who just then came back up the green-room stairs.

What she said Oliver could not of course understand, but Mr. Griengro, now made up in a manner very dissimilar to that which he had assumed before, came near and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Come, brother," said Peter, coaxingly. "No use making a row here. You'll be cleaned out before you can do a thing. Sit down and watch 'em at it. You see I'm different to-night."

In fact Mr. Griengro had been dressed up in the short interval during which he had disappeared, into the likeness of an old-time Spanish doctor of the seventeenth century, with long black robe, velvet trunks and black silk stockings, etc., etc.

Oliver said no more, but did as he was bid, for he had a wholesome awe of the "bouncing" propensities of the Gipsies.

He sat down on a stool and watched the pro-

gress of the ballet; saw the Countess Cachuca bound down to the footlights; heard the thunders of applause with which she was greeted; and could not help watching her with admiration himself, as she went through, with dramatic grace, the pantomime of the Gipsy Queen's Revenge.

He found himself leaning forward and clapping with might and main at one or two specially brilliant places, and was so much absorbed that he noticed nothing else till he heard the voice of Mr. Trevlac close beside him, saying to him:

"A man might do worse than have such a wife as that, Oliver Calvert. Do your duty and you'll never be sorry for it."

He looked up and saw Mr. Trevlac beside him, looking out over the stage with folded arms as if he had not seen Calvert.

Oliver seemed to shrink into his clothes as he listened, and made no answer.

Mr. Trevlac seemed to expect none, for he remained watching the stage till Mr. Griengro had gone on and suffered the vengeance which looked so terrible before the curtain and so prosaic behind it.

Then as the rustling folds came down and blotted out the audience, Mr. Trevlac said:

"Come, sir, it's time you were out of this. Good-night."

CHAPTER XXXI.

KIDNAPPING.

WHEN Oliver Calvert went home that night from the theater he felt very gloomy and uncomfortable. It seemed to him as if the net that he had been spreading for others was closing in around himself, and he began to doubt his ability to escape exposure.

But the last thing he suspected was the fact that Helen Chester was in communication with either Jacqueline or Harvey Calvert, if indeed Trevlac were that person.

While he was cudgeling his wits for some way out of his difficulties, he was suddenly accosted by Mr. Barlow, who met him in the dark street in the stealthy way habitual with that worthy person, and said in a low tone:

"We've got her now, boss, if you give the word. The Gipsies has gone home and she's a-comin' on alone."

Oliver caught at the news eagerly.

"Are you sure she's alone? Isn't that big agent with her?"

"No. He went off with one of the boys in his gang, and she started out by herself. My men are close on her."

"Take her then," said Oliver, his heart beating joyfully. "You know the place to go."

"All right, boss. Little house in Germantown. Is the old woman there?"

"Yes. Give her the word 'Jacko,' and tell her to lock her up. Look out for her pistol."

"All right, boss. We'll double-bank her, so she won't have no chance to use it."

Away went Mr. Barlow at a dog-trot, and Oliver followed him more leisurely till he turned a corner.

The railroad President knew that Jacqueline could not be far off, and sure enough, on turning into the next street, he was just in time to see a dark confused group of men at the other end rush on a female figure and carry it off bodily to a close carriage that was waiting near by.

He saw them bundle her in, swiftly and silently; slam the door of the carriage; and then the vehicle drove away at a rapid pace, keeping in the dark streets and taking the direction of Germantown.

As they passed Oliver, Mr. Barlow made him a silent signal from the box where he sat by the driver, and the gratified conspirator kept on his way to the hotel, feeling as if a load had been lifted from his heart by this success.

As he turned into Chestnut street he was overtaken by a man who touched his cap and said:

"We took her easy, boss. Came the bag trick on her."

"What do you mean by the bag trick?" asked Oliver.

"Clapped a bag over her from behind afore she knowed anything, and had her shut up afore she could squeak."

"Very good. I'll see you get your pay for the job," said Oliver, hurriedly. "Don't be seen talking to me in public."

"All right, boss. Good-night."

And the man shambled away in the furtive manner peculiar to tramps and spies, while Oliver pursued his way to the hotel in peace.

When he got there the flow of spirits consequent on his first triumph had begun to fade away.

He began to think over the possible consequences to himself if this proceeding were discovered by Trevlac; and the more he thought, the more uneasy he got.

He dreaded to meet Trevlac, and found his heart beating so fast with excitement that he had to go to the bar, call for whisky and take a deep drink, before he could steady himself.

As he came out of the bar, he walked Trevlac, in company with Mr. Griengro and a slender,

boyish-looking young fellow, with light curly hair and a large silky mustache, nearly white in color.

This youth had weak eyes to all appearance, for he had to wear blue goggles, but he strutted past Oliver in a consequential manner, swinging his little cane as if he were anxious to provoke a quarrel.

But Oliver was not in a fighting mood that day, and declined to notice this intrusive young person, who passed on into the bar-room, while Calvert went up-stairs to his own room, packed up his things, came down again to the office, paid his bill, called a carriage, and drove away.

He was bound to hide his tracks if he could.

The young man who had behaved so rudely to him laughed when he went out, and said to Mr. Trevlac, almost in the words of Gipsy Nan to Mr. Griengro a few hours before:

"O diulo na jinava mande." (The fool does not know me.)

Mr. Trevlac smiled.

"It is not best that he should, just now. Will Nan stand the trial, think you?"

"Ask Peter, was the reply."

"Sae will keep the *Kalo Rai* (Black Lord) in the dark," said Mr. Griengro, respectfully; "and they dare not hurt her, for two of my kinsmen are with the men who took her."

Mr. Trevlac nodded and went up to the bar, where Peter took a regular Gipsy drink (deep and strong); while the curly-headed youth lighted a cigar, after which they sauntered out into the billiard room, which commanded a view of the hotel office.

The curly-headed youth took his post by the door, watching the office, while Mr. Griengro and the agent began to play billiards, or rather pretend to play; for they seemed to pay more attention to the hotel desk than the balls.

The youth at the door made a little click with his tongue when Oliver came down to the desk, and the two men at the table continued to watch him furtively, while they played on.

They saw the porter take his valise and precede him out of the hotel, and when the door slammed the curly-headed one ejaculated:

"He's gone away. What must we do?"

"Do? Find where he's gone," said Trevlac, quietly. "George Masengro is outside, and will go with him."

Curly-head turned to Trevlac with a smile.

"You think of everything," he said.

"I have need to," was the quiet reply. "I have something at stake; more than even you have, Jacko."

Then he laid down his cue, paid for the unfinished game, to the great satisfaction of the yawning marker, who forthwith put out the lights; when the three left the hotel and walked down Chestnut street toward Fairmount Park.

They had gone about ten blocks at a leisurely pace, when they saw the lights of the hotel carriage coming back, and Mr. Griengro stepped out in the glare of a gas-lamp and raised both his arms in a peculiar manner to attract attention.

The carriage slackened up and a man came down from the box toward them, after which the vehicle drove on.

The new-comer was instantly recognized as George Masengro (the Butcher), the stoutest Gipsy in the band, and he touched his hat respectfully to Trevlac, waiting to be questioned.

"Where have you been, George?" asked Trevlac.

"To the *Rikeno Rane's beti ker*," was the answer. (Pretty lady's little house.)

Mr. Trevlac started.

"There! Are you sure?"

"I am sure, *boro rai*."

"And who went there with you?"

"The *Kalo Rai* (Black Lord)."

"But is there no one there to watch?"

"Aro, *boro rai* (yes, great lord), I left my kinsman, Jasper Berengro (the Sailor), before the house."

And Mr. George Masengro touched his cap as he concluded his report and waited for orders.

"Go back to the house with Jasper, and bring me any news that he may have to send," said Trevlac; and then he turned away and went back to the hotel with his companions.

Once there, he said to Peter Griengro, who was looking gloomy and uneasy:

"Go quickly. I know where you would be. Take care of her you love."

Mr. Griengro's face lighted up in a moment, and he darted away into the darkness, after rapturously kissing Trevlac's hand; while the manager of the Cachuca Combination said to his curly-headed friend:

"Go to bed, Jacko. I'll stay and wait for news."

"What news do you expect?" asked the youngster, quickly.

"News from her. If seven years have not changed Helen Chester greatly, I shall hear from her to-night."

"But I ought to hear, too," objected the other, pleadingly.

"You shall, in the morning. Just now you need rest from excitement. Do as I wish you, and you shall not repent it. I have taken this matter into my own hands to-night. Remember that the Countess Cachuca has been kid-

napped, and that you are Mr. John Harvey till further orders. Have you registered?"

"Yes, I have."

"Then get your key and go to bed."

Curly-head got up, obediently enough, and went off; while Trevlac lit a cigar and remained in the lower corridor of the hotel, waiting patiently.

The clocks of Philadelphia struck twelve, and the porter was putting away loose chairs for the night, when Mr. Masengro walked in, touched his cap respectfully, and handed the watcher a note.

He tore it open, and read:

"Oliver Calvert has begged aunt Mary's hospitality. He is here for a night or two. Uncle Harvey will retire to Calverton to-morrow. I go with him. If you can be there when we are, I think all may be made right at once. Oliver seems much disturbed about something, but tells me he has great hopes now."

HELEN.

Trevlac nodded to Masengro.

"You can go," he said. "Tell the men we pull up our stakes to-morrow, and roam again. The Romanichalos will return to their tents."

Mr. Masengro's face lighted up with intense satisfaction.

"*Parakra Maderal, parakra tote, boro rai*," (Thank Good, and thank you, great lord) he ejaculated.

Then he went swiftly out of the hotel into the street, and began to turn handsprings in the excess of his delight at the prospect of leaving the town and returning to the wandering ways of his forefathers.

The Gipsies had stood the confinement of stage work very well while they were in Pittsburgh, where there was plenty of excitement during the riots, but since they had entered on a course of peaceful prosperity in Philadelphia they had been growing more restive every day.

Used as they were to open air life, and only coming into the towns in the winter, it was a severe task to them to remain in dusty, brick-paved Philadelphia, while the birds were singing in the parks, and they knew that the hares and chipmunks were chasing their comrades in the country.

Mr. Trevlac read his note over twice, and then softly kissed it and hid it away in his breast-pocket.

Then he went up-stairs to his own room, and nothing more was seen or heard of him till next day, when he strolled down Chestnut street to take a round of the newspaper offices.

That morning a big painted sign was hung up in front of the theater, reading as follows:

"CLOSED FOR THE SEASON."

"WILL REOPEN SEPT. 1ST WITH THE EMINENT TRAGEDY—
"DIAN,"

"MR. CASSIUS OTHELLO JONES."

The afternoon papers contained notices to the effect that "the sudden illness of the Countess Cachuca had necessitated the closing of her engagement, and that the distinguished *danseuse* had been advised by her physician to seek the rest and retirement of country life for a time."

Great regret was expressed at her determination, and hopes that she would soon revisit the City of Brotherly Love.

Oliver Calvert, walking up Market street, on his way to the Germantown Road, bought a paper, read the news, and chuckled to himself.

He had quite recovered his equanimity by this time, and fancied he saw in this sudden move the demoralization of his enemy's forces, produced by the sudden capture of their last card.

He took the horse-cars to Germantown, got out at the terminus, and walked on till he came to a large, old-fashioned brick house in the midst of some neglected-looking grounds.

The place seemed deserted, and all the shutters were closed as he knocked at the door, which was opened to him by an ancient hag of villainous looks.

"Is she quiet?" asked Oliver.

"She's as quiet as chloroform can make her," was the answer as he went in.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A FAMILY TALK.

THE doors and windows of Calverton Manor were once more thrown open to the breeze; the house was full of bustling servants, and Miss Helen Chester, in the capacity of hostess to aunt Mary, was doing her best to make the old lady comfortable; while the neighbors poured in to pay their duty calls and satisfy their curiosity about riot news.

The Senator, bland and imposing as ever, received his guests with his usual urbanity, but was very reticent about his share in the riots, which had by this time been quelled in all parts of Pennsylvania.

The tramps seemed to have about disappeared from that part of the country, and great was the relief of the farmers who had suffered from them in the past.

The country seemed to have recovered its normal tone, and people went about their avocations as usual.

The Senator's family had occupied their coun-

try home about a week, when one morning Miss Chester followed her guardian into the library and said:

"Uncle Harvey, I want to speak to you."

He looked up in surprise from his morning paper.

"What about, Helen?"

"About my cousin Harvey, sir."

The old man's face lighted up.

"Any news? Have you found any evidence?"

"Not yet, sir; but I received this note from Oliver to-day."

She handed him a letter which he read slowly and carefully.

It ran thus:

"DEAR HELEN:

"I have made a discovery and a capture. Jacqueline Raynaud stole the Senator's bonds, and I have her a prisoner. She has written a confession and is ready to swear to it. There is now no reason why Harvey should not come home. I have written to him. I claim your promise."

"OLIVER CALVERT."

"P. S.—I shall be in Calverton to-night with my prisoner penitent."

The Senator seemed hardly able to realize the meaning of the letter till he had read it several times over, and then he said, in a confused, helpless sort of way:

"I don't see why Oliver did not find this out before. It would have saved us seven years' agony."

"I suppose he did not know it," was Helen's indifferent reply, as she stood looking out of the window, apparently more interested in the robins on the lawn than the matter in hand.

"But he says he has found her and written to Harvey. Where is my boy? Why does he not tell us?"

"Possibly he wishes to surprise us by bringing Harvey here, sir."

The old man looked again at the letter.

"Jacqueline has made a confession of the theft. But how then—"

He paused as if in deep thought and Helen did not venture to rouse him from his distraction till he suddenly broke out:

"Oh, I wish to Heaven that artful jade had never entered my house."

"Why not, sir?"

"I see it all. She never went away to marry any member of my family as she said. It was all a lie from first to last. She stole the bonds, made love to Harvey; and he, poor boy, was forced into keeping her secret. She tempted him and he fell."

Helen again made no answer, and his mood changed to cheerfulness as he returned to the letter.

"What a smart fellow Oliver must be to have found this out so quietly. He will be here to-night with his 'prisoner penitent.' That's quite a pretty alliteration. Oliver was always fond of his joke."

"Yes, sir, especially at other people's expense."

"At other people's expense? How so, Helen?"

"At all of our expense, sir. It is hardly a subject for jokes."

"Oh, I don't know that. I feel as if a mountain had been lifted from my heart and I could laugh at any folly. Harvey is coming home to his father before he dies, and Oliver will be the means of restoring him to me."

Helen smiled in a bitter, cynical sort of way as she continued to look out of the window, and the old man said fretfully:

"But you never would do justice to Oliver. You always hated him. And yet you are the first person he writes to, in his joy."

Again Helen made no answer, and the Senator turned to the letter, as if seeking there the consolation she denied him.

"What does he mean by saying he claims your promise? What promise have you made him?"

"To marry him, sir."

The Senator jumped up from his chair in an excited manner.

"To marry him! You! Helen! Marry Oliver! Why, what for, in the name of common sense?"

"Because I promised to do so, in a certain contingency, sir."

The old man quieted down as she spoke, and stared at her with great amazement.

When he spoke again it was in a voice, trembling with some hidden emotion.

"And what was that contingency, Helen?"

"That he should reconcile you and Harvey, sir."

"And you promised to marry him if he could accomplish that?"

"He asked me, as he had so often before, to marry him; and I told him that if he could reconcile Harvey and you, I would not oppose his wishes any longer. That is the whole story, sir."

"But you do not like Oliver?"

"No, sir."

"You have always seemed to hate him, Helen?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you will marry him?"

"I will keep my promise, sir."

"Then it is really owing to this matter of yourself and Harvey that you are proven."

"Nothing is proven yet, sir."

"But when it is, I shall owe it all to you?"

Helen made no answer.

The Senator eyed her sharply for a moment and then burst out:

"Helen, you're a—well, I won't be extravagant—but, you're a *good girl*. You shall not lose by it. I promised you that if you proved my son's innocence you should have all my fortune at my death. You shall, and more than that. On the day I can honorably embrace my son, be it to-morrow or not, I will make over half my fortune to you. You and Oliver shall have something to enable you to live peaceably together. What do you think of that?"

"I think you are very kind, sir."

Her tone was constrained; so much so that the Senator noticed it and said, kindly:

"Don't take it to heart so, Helen. Love-matches are not always the happiest, and love is sure to come after awhile, when the husband is such a noble fellow as Oliver. If it were any one else I would protest against sacrificing you to a man you dislike; but I know you are prejudiced against Oliver because you don't know him as I do; and that you'll end by loving him as devotedly as any wife in America."

"Perhaps so, sir," said Helen, coldly. "Now I've told you the news, I suppose I can go out for a ride alone."

"I don't know, Helen. The country may not be so safe as we think yet. There may be tramps lurking about in the woods."

"Constable Davis says the whole country is clear of them, sir. He was in the kitchen this morning and I told the cook to give him breakfast."

"You'd better take one of the boys with you, Helen. I don't like this riding out alone."

"Very well, sir."

Helen bowed, vanished, and went straight to the stable bell to order out her horse; but gave no intimation whatever of obeying the Senator's wishes in the matter; for when she rode out it was through the back way, alone and unattended by any groom, even at the regulation fifteen paces' distance in the rear.

Now the back way of Calverton Manor led into the farm which adjoined the grounds round the house, and down a shady lane into some quiet country roads, overshadowed by great locust and elm trees, which bordered the way for miles into Calverton woods.

Helen rode gently on till she neared the woods, when she saw in the distance an approaching horseman.

Then she quickened her pace and soon met a slender boyish youth with fair curly hair, a drooping flaxen mustache and blue goggles over his eyes.

This youth wore a light and fashionably cut riding suit and rode a slender sorrel horse, with the wiry nervous look of good blood about it.

The rider's hands and feet were very small and elegantly shaped, and he rode with the ease and grace of an old equestrian.

Helen looked with some little curiosity at this youth as he passed him; but kept on the other side of the road, as not wishing to converse with a stranger.

The young man with the curly hair, on his part, bowed ceremoniously as he passed, and Helen rode on, thinking she had seen the last of him and wondering a little who he was, for he was evidently not a resident of that part of the country.

Presently she heard the quick hoof-beats of a galloping horse behind her, and looking round in some astonishment, beheld the curly cavalier coming after her.

For a moment she felt startled and terrified; for there was no one on the road within sight but her pursuer; but the next moment her courage returned.

She had noticed the slight figure of the stranger, and judged him to be half a head shorter than herself, she being a tall, robust girl, and he a very small, dapper sort of youth.

She had in her saddle-pocket, as usual, her little pistol, which she always carried in the country when riding alone.

Therefore, instead of starting up her horse into a faster gallop, she checked him to a walk, sat up straight in her saddle, and looked as coldly severe as a statue of Minerva, as the audacious stranger dashed alongside and pulled up his horse.

Then she turned on him with flashing eyes, asking:

"What do you mean, sir? Who are you? How dare you?"

Curly-head smiled with an air of great amusement as he retorted:

"Three questions in one breath. What do I mean? Who am I? How dare I? Well, I'll answer them all as well as I can. I mean business; I am a horse-dealer; I dare do anything in the way of business. How much will you take for that horse?"

"I am not in the horse-dealing line," replied the lady, in her most sarcastic tones. "I don't want to sell. I want to be left alone. Good-day."

Curly-head said that this was simply an important question, and rode on in her own horse, the

laid on her whip sharply and darted away, expecting to distance her companion.

To her amazement, the little jockey kept neck to neck with her with apparent ease, and continued the conversation as quietly as if nothing unusual had occurred.

"Well, miss, if I can't buy your horse, what will you give for mine? I'm always open to an offer, buy or sell. What will you give? Come."

Now thoroughly angry at his persistent intrusion, she turned round in her saddle and lifted her riding-whip.

"I'll give you this, if you don't cease annoying me," she cried. "If you're a gentleman, you'll leave me."

The little man laughed again.

"I'm not a gentleman," he said, in the coolest manner. "I don't profess to be anything but what I am. Take a card, miss. Happy to oblige you any time you want a mount. I'll give you three fifty for yours, or take five hundred for this. There's a fair offer. You won't? Well, here's my card. Any time you want me, you know. Good-by."

With the cool impudence that had characterized him all through, he stuck his card into her saddle-pocket, on the gallop as both horses were, and then wheeled his animal and rode off, leaving Helen further unmolested.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE GIPSY CAMP.

IN the midst of that charming nook in the woods of Calverton, that went by the name of the "Tramp's Paradise," was gathered a picturesque little camp of Gipsies; very different from the motley gang of roughs that had profaned the place a few weeks before.

Kind Nature, thanks to the rippling stream and the suns of July and August, had covered over the traces of the tramps with a protecting mantle of grasses and ferns, so that the place looked as beautiful as ever.

The Gipsies, with their horses and wagons, their arched tents and booths, contributed a romantic air to the scene, as the girls flitted about in their scarlet cloaks from fire to fire. The men were scattered about, making baskets and cordage, mats and brooms; Mr. Andrew Yagengro, (fire-fellow,) the blacksmith, was clinking away on his little traveling forge, while Mr. Masengro was cutting up a pig in a remote corner, under the trees.

The Gipsies all looked happy and well satisfied to be away from the cities and roaming the greenwood again; for the Arab is not truer to his desert than the Romanichal to the wandering life of his tribe.

Mr. Peter Griengro was industriously cleaning a compact little black horse, whose coat already shone like satin, humming to himself, meanwhile, the mournful refrain of a Romany love song which described the loss of the loved one, when he heard the tramp of a horse's feet among the underbrush, and spied a young lady riding toward the camp.

He paused in his work long enough to say, aloud:

"*Ripeno rance. Are, raprior; regandro du-roken littor.*"

Helen heard the words, which were to her unmeaning gibberish, but the Gipsy girls understood the summons better, for Mr. Griengro had said:

"A pretty lady. Come, girls, bring in the fortune-telling books."

The camp took no apparent notice of the stranger; the men continued at their various avocations without looking up or speaking; the old women went on stirring the hanging kettles; and only the little children stared at the graceful figure in the riding habit that came slowly into camp on the handsome bay horse.

It was Helen Chester, who checked her pace, halted at the outskirts of the little camp, and looked on with pleasure at the pretty picture it presented; it was Jenny Griengro, a sister of Peter, who came smiling and wheedling forward to the horse's head, saying:

"Won't the pretty lady have her fortune told? Jenny, the Gipsy, can tell her whom she'll marry, if the pretty lady will cross her hand with a piece of silver."

Helen smiled.

"And how if I cross it with gold?"

"The better the money, the better the tale," replied Jenny, unblushingly. "I'll take more trouble and tell you more."

"But it won't be any truer, will it?" asked Helen, still smiling.

Jenny drew herself up as if offended.

"The Romanich never lies, pretty lady. I could tell your fortune now, if I chose."

"But I don't want my fortune told," retorted Helen. "I came here with a different purpose. You are the people who were at the theater with Jacko, the Countess Cachuca, I mean. I want to see her. Where is she?"

Jenny stared at her in undisguised amazement and then a crafty look came over her dark face.

"Why, don't you know they took her away in Philadelphia? Him they call the Black Lord, that ran away from Grubstip, he took her."

Helen looked at her sharply.

"Are you telling the truth?" she asked. "He

says he did, but I don't believe him. Isn't she here now?"

"Oh, no, my lady, certainly not," was the glib reply from Jenny's Madonna-like lips, as easy as lying. "We've not seen her for ever so long."

"I'm sorry," said Helen in a disappointed tone. "I thought—but never mind. You say she is not here?"

"No, my lady."

Helen hesitated a few moments, and then turned rosy red as she asked in a low voice:

"Where is your king, Nemo?"

Jenny looked up at her with a roguish twinkle of her black eyes.

"Gone too."

"Gone where?"

"To look after the Rancee Jacko."

With a peevish exclamation, Helen turned away her horse's head and was about to depart, when she heard a shrill whistle in the woods at some distance off, which produced a decided stir in the Gipsy camp.

Several of the men jumped up from the tasks at which they were engaged and dashed off through the woods as if their lives depended on it.

"What's the matter?" asked Helen in some surprise.

"A message from Boro Rai," said Jenny quietly. "He has found Jacko."

"Then I must see both of them," was Helen's comment; and she rode off through the woods after the Gipsies, whom she soon found grouped around the identical impertinent little horse-jockey she had met on the road.

Something in this fact made her remember that she had his card in her saddle-pocket, where he had so unceremoniously left it, and she pulled it out to see what his name was.

She found a small neat card, on which was printed in clear Roman type, the following inscription:

"JOHN RAYNOR,

"CONTRACTOR AND DEALER IN LIVE STOCK OF ALL KINDS.

"Commission Business a Specialty."

But even Helen, though not an expert in business affairs, noticed that there was no address on the card, and came to the conclusion that Mr. John Raynor's business was only a blind.

Seeing him hail-fellow-well-met with the Gipsies, settled his status in her mind; and without further curiosity she rode away back to the road, and so toward Calverton.

She was much disappointed in the result of her visit. She had expected to find Jacqueline in the camp; for, ever since the night of the burglary, when the disguised girl had saved her from the clutches of Billy Barlow, Helen had been in constant secret communication with her old friend and governess, so long lost to view. She knew that Jacqueline had in some mysterious manner acquired a great control over the Gipsies, and that she was always with the still more mysterious king, Nemo, whom Helen had only seen once, but whom she nevertheless suspected to be none other than the vanished cousin Harvey she remembered so well.

She had no confidence in Oliver Calvert's letter, and at first fully believed he lied, inasmuch as Jacqueline had told her a very singular story on the night in which they had foiled the burglars at Calverton Manor.

It was on the strength of that story that the warm-hearted girl had been working ever since, planning scheme after scheme to right her cousin, who had been her hero of romance seven years before, when she was a school-girl of thirteen, and whom she had enshrined in her heart ever since, with a worship of which the women, Helen, did not so much as suspect the real nature.

Now, as she rode away, she felt very low in spirits, for she began to think Oliver might be right after all, and the remembrance of her promise to marry him came like a leaden weight on her mind.

"What shall I do? What shall I do?" said the poor girl to herself, as she rode along. "I do not love him; I even hate him, and yet I must marry him if he reconciles Harvey to his father. And uncle Harvey is so crazy for joy that he thinks of nothing but himself. I hope I shall not live long after it's all over. I think I could die happy if I only saw Harvey home again, but I'm sure I can never live happy with that wretch."

She had been so earnestly engaged in her own thoughts that she was unconsciously speaking aloud, pacing along in the dusty road with the reins on her horse's neck.

It was with a nervous start that she heard some one say:

"What wretch! I hope you don't think me a wretch, miss."

Reddening with anger at the rude intrusion, Helen turned in her saddle and saw little Mr. John Raynor, neat, dapper and impertinent, ambling close beside her on the soft grass by the road, smiling as serenely as ever.

"Who are you, sir?" she asked. "How dare you interrupt me again? Be off with you or

I'll teach you not to insult a lady in this manner."

She gathered up her reins, clutched her whip and wheeled her horse to ride at him with castigatory intent; but the little jockey "passed" away across the road with a speed that kept him out of danger, as he cried out, still laughing:

"Why, you know me well enough. I'm Jack Raynor. If you won't trade horses, here's a letter for you from a friend of yours. I'd have given it you before, but you wouldn't stop."

He held out a note as he spoke, but Helen was too suspicious of his easy impudence to believe him at once.

"Who is it from?" she asked.

"From a gentleman called Trevlac," was the reply. "I met him in Philadelphia, and he charged me with this to you."

Helen flushed and paled, for Jacqueline had told her on the night of the burglary how they were going to take a variety show to Pittsburg and Philadelphia, and how the Gipsy king was to take the name of Trevlac.

The very sound of this peculiar name had strengthened her idea that he was Harvey Calvert, and the messages she had received in the city through the various Gipsies of the band had completed the chain of evidence.

"Give me the letter then," she said, a little more graciously; and Mr. Raynor rode up beside her, his air now perfectly respectful, and handed her the letter of which he spoke.

Helen opened and began to peruse it. Soon she grew so absorbed in its contents that she forgot everything, let the reins fall on her horse's neck and read eagerly on.

Thus ran the letter:

"HELEN:—But for you I should never again have come near my father's house, and but for you I might have still been happy in my self-imposed exile. I wished to see my little girl-playmate, grown a woman, and I found her an angel. For your sake alone I will do what you ask. I will come home and be there when Oliver comes. Whatever the issue, God bless you. NEMO."

She let the paper fall on her lap and sat idly gazing up the road, when that impudent little jockey, John or Jack Raynor, suddenly threw his arms round her neck before she was aware of his intent, half-dragging her out of the saddle, and plumped three loud smacking kisses full on her lips, with the exclamation:

"Helen, you're a darling. Good-by!"

In another moment he had pushed her back, scarlet with shame and indignation, while he dashed in his spurs and shot away like an arrow, leaving Helen alone in the road, so beside herself with fury that she actually reached for her pistol to kill this insolent little wretch.

The smallness of his size made his impudence only the more provoking, as Helen's anger was not mixed with fear, and could she have found her pistol she would have fired after him.

But, still more to her mortification, it was gone, and she came to the safe conclusion that Mr. Raynor had taken it while she was reading her note. In this she was right no doubt, and after a little burst of angry tears she made up her mind to get even with Mr. Raynor at some future time, and so rode home peaceably.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

OLIVER ARRIVES.

THAT afternoon Senator Calvert received a telegram, saying:

"Home on 6:45 train. Jacqueline and detective with me. Send two wagons to meet us."

"OLIVER."

The old gentleman was instantly in a fever of excitement, driving quiet aunt Mary nearly out of her wits by his nervous ways, and squabbling with Helen at intervals because she kept so cool and looked so gloomy.

When she refused to drive to the station to meet Oliver he was considerably nettled, and angrily observed:

"If you had as much at stake as I have, you wouldn't be so careless, Helen. I sometimes think you have no feeling for any one except your own self. Good-evening, Miss Chester."

And the indignant Senator, shooting this Partisan arrow of sarcasm to rattle in Helen's bosom, stepped into the wagon and was driven away.

Aunt Mary looked troubled and timid as she stood on the piazza with Helen; but the girl only smiled somewhat sadly in answer to the anxious looks of her relative.

"He doesn't know, aunt Mary. He'll be sorry for this when he thinks over it. Uncle Harvey is quick-tempered, but he doesn't mean to be cruel."

"No, no, Helen; not cruel; but thee knows men never understand us rightly to the last. Most men, that is. My poor Nathaniel, in the spirit these many years, was different. And does thee think this wicked French girl has confessed at last? What a triumph for young Harvey thus to be found innocent without seeking to prove it!"

Helen smiled faintly.

"Yes, aunt Mary. That is a good thing anyway. Will you excuse me a little? I feel a headache coming on, unless I lie down for an hour, before they come back."

"Certainly, Helen. Thee needn't use ceremony with me."

So Helen went up to her own room, locked the door, and then, instead of lying down, as she had declared she was about to do, threw herself into a rocking-chair and indulged in a long and bitter fit of crying.

The ordeal was at hand, and she felt she would have to face it.

It was not in Helen's resolute nature, however, long to give way to despondency.

"I must do it," she finally said to herself, "and if I must, I will. No one shall say I did not keep my word at any cost."

So she attired herself in her richest garments as if for a festival, and came down-stairs, smiling and placid, taking a seat on the piazza with aunt Mary, who was already dozing away in her great cane rocker in pursuance of the mild fiction that she was waiting to receive the travelers.

The sun went down, and just before his red disk touched the western horizon they heard the long scream of the train coming in.

Helen turned white at the sound, set her teeth hard, and tapped her foot nervously on the ground, but showed no further emotion.

Aunt Mary awoke with a gurgle and sniff, rubbed her eyes and exclaimed:

"Why, Helen, is thee there? I must have been half asleep, for I didn't hear thee. They're not coming yet, are they?"

"The train's just in. The drive will take twenty minutes," said Helen in a hard metallic tone. "I must go up-stairs again. My head begins to pain me once more."

"Thee'd better take a walk on the lawn in the cool grass," said aunt Mary, sympathizingly. "The sun is nearly down now."

"I think I will."

And Helen walked off into the grounds, pacing nervously to and fro on the grass among the firs and spruces, and trying to work off her excitement so as to meet Oliver calmly.

Had she been a man, she would have taken a drink to steady her nerves; but, being a lady, Helen was denied the male consolation, and had to rely on her powers of self-control.

After awhile, when she was off among the shrubbery, she heard the dull rumble of wheels and hid herself to watch.

First came the Senator, in the two-seated drag, driving his own span of grays, with Oliver Calvert, bland and smiling, beside him.

In the hind seat was a big fat man, with a clean-shaven face and a general air of new clothes about him, and by his side cowered, rather than sat, a slender female figure, closely veiled in spite of the heat.

The second vehicle was a light spring wagon full of baggage.

Helen watched them drive up to the house, and saw Oliver salute aunt Mary in his most grandiloquent manner, while the big man and the veiled woman were hurried into the house. Then she saw Oliver look round him in an inquiring sort of way and realized that he was asking for her.

With a slight sigh she gave to the winds the last semblance of emotion and walked up the steps as cold and unimpressionable as a statue moved by machinery.

"Good-evening, cousin Oliver," was all she said, as he hurried forward to grasp her hand with both his.

"Helen, it is I," he answered, in a low, fervent tone. "I have cleared Harvey. Have you nothing more to say to me than that?"

"Where is Harvey?" she asked, in the same cold, stony manner.

"He will be here soon," he answered. "There will be no more trouble about reconciliation; so I claim your word."

"I will keep it, sir!"

Her tones were perfectly icy as she snatched her hand away from his with a sort of shiver and went up to her guardian.

"Uncle Harvey, have you heard all?"

The old man was radiant with joy and excitement.

"Yes, I've heard all. The boy was a fool, but not as bad a knave as I thought. I can forgive him the rest."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Oh, he never promised to marry that French jade. She doesn't say he did. Her letter to me was only to throw dust in my eyes. She was fond of change, and threw herself at poor Harvey's head. I can't blame the boy, for she was a woman of the world who could just wind him round her finger. He was fool enough to leave college and meet her in Baltimore, where he first learned the way she had robbed me. Then she had the impudence to persuade him to go traveling with her to spend all that money, knowing I would never prosecute my own son. That's all."

"Then why didn't he tell you, sir, when you saw him?"

"Because the artful jade had made him give his word of honor not to tell any one. The young idiot!"

Helen compressed her lips.

"He kept his word, however."

"Yes, and what did he get for it? It makes me angry now to think what a fool the boy

was. But I don't care now. I can forgive him all, for he is my own flesh and blood."

Helen nodded her head slowly and turned away, while the old Senator paced up and down the piazza, looking toward the gate.

"When did you say he'd be here?" he asked Oliver, in the pause of one of his walks.

"An hour after sunset, sir. He writes in a mysterious manner."

"Where from? How did the letter reach you?"

"From Philadelphia. I suspected he was Harvey, from the moment I spelled his name backward and found it made Calvert. The letter I sent him went through his hotel, and the answer came to me by a Gipsy called Griengro."

"Who is that man with Jacqueline, upstairs?"

"The private detective of the company. He found and arrested her. I could trust him anywhere."

"What's his name?"

"Barlow, sir."

"Is he an old hand?"

"Yes, sir. He used to be with us a long time ago, but has not done much work till lately."

"How did you get her to write out that confession?"

"The detective altogether, sir. He got her frightened into telling the truth and wouldn't let me see her at all. Very arbitrary, those detectives."

"Then do you mean you've not said a word to Jacqueline yet?"

"Oh, no. I spoke to her on the train long enough to be satisfied that she was not fooling us all with a sham story."

Here the old Senator, who had been looking out toward the gate of the grounds, gave a nervous start.

"Gracious heavens! what's that?" he exclaimed. "Look, Oliver!"

The President of the Air Line Road looked round, and saw in the faint gloom of the twilight a motley crew of tramps and vagabonds, in all sorts of rags, coming up the gravel walk in a body toward the house, headed by the tall form of King Nemo.

The old Senator a few weeks before would have been indignant at this intrusion on his privacy, but the Pittsburg riots seemed to have put a great deal of the milk of human kindness into his heart.

The King of the Tramps, in all his glory of streaming tatters and wild hair and beard, came silently over the lawn to the foot of the steps, followed by a single boy in a suit of rags as pitiable as his own.

The rest of the tramps staid behind, but King Nemo held out a wooden bowl and cried out in his deep, musical tones:

"Alms for the sake of the lost! Charity to the wanderer who has no home!"

The Senator put his hand in his pocket and dropped some silver in the bowl, as he said kindly:

"There, there, my poor fellow. Take that and please go away. I expect my son here every moment, and don't want to be interrupted in our meeting."

"Are you sure you'll know your son when he comes?" asked Nemo, in a sententious sort of way.

The Senator looked at him in haughty surprise, retorting:

"What's that to you?"

King Nemo bowed low in a quiet, apologetic sort of way.

"Nothing, of course. I thank you for your alms. Will the beautiful ladies drop one coin in the box of Nemo the Wanderer?"

Helen Chester, who had been looking earnestly at him, suddenly swept forward beside her guardian, seized the box from Nemo's fingers and dashed it impetuously on the ground.

Then, in a regular feminine burst of emotion, she turned first to one, then the other, crying and laughing as she spoke:

"Don't you see who it is, uncle? For shame, Harvey, that a cousin of mine should come to his father's house in such a guise as this. Throw away those dreadful rags, and show yourself the gentleman you are! Oh, uncle Harvey, how could you be so blind? Your own son begs of you, and you know him not."

The Senator had stood perfectly astounded at this burst, and now he faltered out:

"This! My son! This? My God!"

Then he staggered back and would have fallen, but for a pillar on which he leaned for support, as he stared haggardly at the grotesquely frightful figure of the King of the Tramps.

Nemo said nothing.

At last the Senator raised one hand, trembling with emotion.

"In God's name," he said, "are you my son, Harvey Calvert?"

"No," was the unexpected reply, in deep, solemn tones.

"Then who are you?"

"Nemo the Lost, King of the Tramps. You have no son."

The Senator gasped for breath.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ROUNDING UP.

A DEEP silence came over the group on the piazza as the King of the Tramps made his solemn asseveration that Senator Calvert *had no son*.

Oliver Calvert especially seemed to be overwhelmed with astonishment, for he stood staring at the other as if utterly at a loss what to say.

But Helen, with her acute woman's wit, saw that something was behind all this, and broke the spell by saying:

"Uncle Harvey, ask him what he means, dear? I know I'm not mistaken."

Thus urged, the Senator asked:

"Tell me what you mean, Harvey?"

"Seven years ago," said Nemo, in his deep, hollow tones, "you told me you had no son. I obeyed you. I ceased to be your son. None can restore me to my rightful place but the man who can give me back my honor."

Here Oliver eagerly interrupted:

"I have done it already, Harvey. That wretched girl has made a full confession to the detective. Your father has seen it, and your honor is safe. Throw away those rags, badges of your degradation, I implore you, and resume your station."

Nemo threw back his head with a gesture of regal dignity that sorted well with his title, and ennobled his wild attire.

"These rags are my mantle of freedom," he said, proudly. "No dress so well becomes him who has no name, no family, nothing but his own right arm and an honest heart."

Then turning to the Senator, he said more gently:

"You meant well. You were deceived. Appearances were against me and I could not speak in honor. My secret was another's. It was all for the best. Your son was an invalid, pining under excess of care. Since the day Harvey Calvert ceased to be, Nemo has become strong. For the frescoed ceiling he has had God's blue sky in change; for the down bed, the hard earth. The road and the greenwood have put vigor into his limbs and blood into his heart, and here he stands to-day, thanks to the decrees of Fate—a man!"

"But I tell you, Harvey, Jacqueline has confessed," urged Oliver. "There is no reason why you should not be reconciled to your father."

Nemo laughed, a short, bitter laugh.

"She has confessed, has she? What?"

"That she stole the bonds, tried to make you run away with her, and made all the mischief."

"She lies, then, if she said any such thing," returned Nemo, quietly.

The old Senator, who had been mutely listening, eagerly interrupted:

"What do you mean, Harvey?"

"That she has confessed nothing, and he knows it."

Oliver started back in anger and amazement.

"Confessed *nothing*? Why, she is in this house now, and I can produce her in a moment."

"She is *not*!"

The answer was as clear and strong as Oliver's asseveration.

Again Helen's keen wit began to see something behind all this.

"Bring her out, Oliver," she said, briskly. "We'll soon see if you've been deceiving us, sir."

Oliver, nowise loth, darted off into the house for his captive, and Helen continued, speaking to her uncle:

"It grows dark. Can we not finish this discussion in the house?"

"It cannot be," said King Nemo, softly. "Nemo never enters that house till Harvey Calvert's name is cleared of stain. Bring lights on the lawn if you will. I will come."

He bowed and retired into the darkness, which had now completely closed in, and the Senator ejaculated:

"It is Harvey. I am sure, now. But, oh, how changed! He will not forgive me, and I thought to forgive him."

Helen made no answer, but went off to the back of the house, whence she soon returned with two servants carrying Chinese lanterns, in strings, on light poles, such as are used in garden parties.

These were soon lighted and stuck in a circle on the lawn, when the watchers looked round for the tramps.

To Helen's surprise they had disappeared entirely, and Oliver was coming from the house with Mr. Billy Barlow, leading between them the veiled woman.

Then Oliver advanced into the circle of light, where the Senator, aunt Mary and Helen were now standing, and said:

"Now, Jacqueline Raynaud, speak out and say whether you wrote this confession or no?"

"Ay, ay," said Mr. Barlow, affably. "I'll swear she did, 'cause I made her do it myself."

"Silence, fellow!" interrupted the Senator, irritably. "Who asked *you* to speak? Jacqueline, answer."

The veiled female bowed her head and mut-

tered something they did not understand under her veil.

Mr. Barlow's ears seemed to be finer, for he volunteered to say:

"Lady feels ashamed of the row she's made in this here family, and wants to make a clean breast of it, if you'll let her off easy."

"Oh, she needn't fear," answered the Senator, scornfully. "She's made more trouble, now, than all the punishment we could give her would avenge. Let her speak out. She shall go free."

The frame of the veiled lady was shaken by a perfect paroxysm of sorrow, and Billy patted her softly on the back, to cheer her up, saying:

"Don't take on now, marm. Gent's very kind, I'm sure. It'll all be right in a little time."

But, the more he patted, the more she shook; and matters seemed to be at a standstill, when Helen suddenly uttered a cry of mingled astonishment and anger.

Out of the darkness in the shrubbery, walking full into the circle of light came Mr. Jack Raynor, swinging a dainty little cane, and whistling as he walked, while behind him was the tall figure of Mr. Trevlac, in his neat and careful attire, resembling the rags of King Nemo in nothing whatever.

But Helen knew it was the same man, and her maidenly anger, at the sight of the audacious jockey, rose to fever heat at the prospect of getting even with him.

Forgetting all about the case before them, she ran to Mr. Trevlac, hung on his arm, and said, pointing to the dapper little man:

"Cousin Harvey, that wretch insulted me to-day. I want you to punish him at once, for me."

Mr. Trevlac looked down with a twinkle of amusement under his dark eyelashes, asking:

"Insulted you?—how? What did he do? Did he call you any names?"

Helen turned as red as fire.

"I tell you he insulted me. Will you punish him or not?"

"I didn't insult her. I only called her a darling and kissed her," observed Mr. Raynor, in the coolest manner. "Come, Helen, don't be ridiculous. You're stopping the business."

As he spoke, in a tone of very great significance, he took off his blue goggles and looked into her eyes with a pair of brilliant black orbs, that contrasted strangely with his fair red and white face, flaxen curls and white mustache.

Something in the look of those eyes caused Helen to cool down almost instantly, and before long one might have noticed her furtively squeezing the hand of Mr. Raynor, as if they had been sworn lovers.

The little incident had caused a momentary ripple of excitement, but it died away as Trevlac spoke with quiet dignity.

"Mr. Oliver Calvert's explanation is in order now. Let him produce his witness."

Senator Calvert looked at the tall figure of his banished son with a sort of longing that was very pathetic.

He stretched out his arms.

"Harvey, my son, can you not forgive your poor old father?"

Trevlac's face changed slightly and turned perceptibly pale, though his beard hid the workings of his features.

"There is nothing to forgive, sir," he said. "You never wronged me. I could not have told you, and we both had to suffer for another's wrong. Let that pass. One is here who can right the wrong."

"Ay," said the old man, bitterly. "There she stands, the shameless jade! Let her speak quickly."

Trevlac shook his head.

"Be not too hasty, sir. You may be mistaken. Oliver Calvert, produce your witness."

Thus urged, Oliver, whose face had been working strangely during this conversation, said to the veiled female:

"Jacqueline, unvail and tell your story."

His voice trembled as he spoke, and he seemed to be penetrated by some secret anxiety.

The veiled woman put up her hands with a quick, nervous motion; Mr. Barlow stepped back with a very queer grin on his greasy face; and in a twinkling off came hat, veil, cloak, and skirts, with the loosening of a single string, when, *presto!* out stepped the trim figure of Gipsy Nan in her picturesque attire.

"All right, Mr. Calvert," observed Nan, in her gayest tones; "I'll tell the whole story at once."

Then, turning to the Senator, she went on glibly:

"I'm Gipsy Nan, your honor, and this gentleman had me kidnapped for Jacko last week. I didn't say anything, because several of my people were in the secret, and we agreed to fool this man between us, after we had bought over Billy Barlow. Billy did the business, and kept him from seeing me. Mr. Calvert wrote out a confession which he wanted me to sign, and promised me a good living as a lady if I'd do it. I didn't mind doing anything in reason to oblige a gentleman, so here I am. That's all, your honor."

Oliver was the picture of mortification while

this singular revelation was going on, and he turned on Barlow with a bitter scowl.

"So you've cheated me, have you?" he hissed. "Well yes, boss. The other gent offered more, and I found the Gipsies had got the whip-hand of me any way, so I gave in."

"And all this story of Jacqueline and a confession is moonshine," said Mr. Trevlac, quietly. "Now, Oliver Calvert, what are you going to do?"

Oliver eyed him with a pale face, but a sardonic smile curled his lip.

"Nothing at all," he said. "What do you make of that? Will you do anything?"

Trevlac sighed slightly as he answered: "You know I cannot. Only two people can unlock the past, and you are one of them."

The Senator had been gazing wistfully at them, and now he cried:

"For God's sake, Oliver, let no foolish scruple of honor restrain you. Tell me the truth, even if it bear hard on your cousin. I have forgiven him. Tell all you know."

"I have nothing to tell, sir," was the sullen reply; and Oliver turned away his head to conceal his face. "I have nothing to tell. You know the evidence was overwhelming against my cousin. In my foolishness I tried to save him by inducing this girl, whom I thought to be Jacqueline, to confess; but it seems I have been tricked by this villain, Barlow. I have nothing to tell."

"But I have," suddenly observed a soft voice; and into the circle walked the dapper little jockey, arm in arm with Helen Chester.

Oliver started back as if he had seen a ghost; the Senator and aunt Mary looked earnestly on the new-comer, and the latter asked:

"Who is thee, friend, and what dost thee know of this sad affair?"

"I am the one person who can and will tell the truth about it," answered Raynor, a slight tremor shaking his clear tones.

"You!" cried Oliver, indignantly, advancing on him as if to crush him. "Who are you, impudent little puppy that you are?"

Raynor faced him and dashed off wig and false mustache in a trice.

"I am your legal wife!" said Jacqueline Raynaud.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A STRANGE STORY.

"You lie!" cried Oliver, livid with rage. "You know you lie! I never married you."

"Do you deny it?" asked Jacqueline, in a low voice.

"I do. You were never anything more to me than—"

He stopped short as the nervous gripe of Trevlac clutched his shoulder.

"Beware!" said the tall man, in deep, ominous tones. "I gave my word not to expose you, but I never said I would not avenge an insult to my cousin's wife, no matter if it came from my cousin."

Oliver had remained dead white, and now he faltered:

"I don't want to insult any one, but I never married that woman."

"Do you deny I am your wife?" again demanded Jacqueline, slowly.

This time Oliver had to draw a deep breath ere he answered:

"I deny it."

"Do you deny that any ceremony passed between us?" she asked, still in the gentlest of voices.

"I do," he answered.

"Oliver," said the girl, going up close to him and laying her hand on his arm, "be just while you can. I tell you that your time is coming. You know that I left home at your promise and—"

"I know nothing of the sort," he retorted, harshly. "If you were fool enough to run away, it was no fault of mine."

"Then you wish to drive me into telling the truth?" asked she, a glitter of the old fierce temper coming into her eyes.

"You can say what you please," he answered. "No one will believe your word."

Then Jacqueline turned away from him and went up to the old Senator, who had been looking on in silent amazement, supported by aunt Mary and Helen.

"Sir," she said, "you see in me one who injured you and yours, but without intending it. For seven years you have banished your son, thinking him a robber. Here I swear to you, before high Heaven, I tell the truth when I say that the villain who has caused all this misery is none other than your nephew, Oliver Calvert."

The Senator bowed his head gravely.

"Go on," he said. "Prove what you say, madam. I am ready to hear."

Oliver had folded his arms and stood waiting, a defiantly sarcastic smile on his face.

Jacqueline cast one mournful look at him; but finding him as impenetrable as a rock, she began her little story.

"That you may understand all the past, I must go back to the beginning. You remember how I first entered your house, an orphan girl, only protected by the kindness of your noble

son. When my father died, you gave me a home, and never was orphan treated with such kindness as I experienced in your house."

"And yet you brought misery on it," said the Senator, gravely.

"Hear me out, sir, and I will tell you all. I was not so bad as you thought me. Remember, I come of Gipsy blood, and my father had led a wandering life with my mother's tribe for years before settling at the college. I had learned to dance and sing, to talk my tribe's tongue and those of my father and the Americans, but of any training outside of that I had none. My mother died when I was a little child, and my reading consisted of all the French novels my father read and threw aside. Till I met Mr. Harvey Calvert, I had never seen a pure-minded gentleman; and he was then so thin and awkward, the butt of so many jokes at college, that I laughed at him, even while I loved and respected him for his goodness to my father and myself. In that frame of mind, a frivolous girl, I came to your house and first saw Oliver Calvert. He was a handsome man then, ten years older than Harvey. Is it any wonder that when he noticed the poor little nursery governess she was first flattered, then frightened, and that finally she fell headlong in love with him? Ah, sir, you forget how changed he is now."

"No, no, I remember," said the old man, gently. "He was a fine fellow, and I often used to wish my poor delicate boy were more like him. Go on, Jacqueline."

"Ay, go on, Jacqueline," observed Oliver, in his most bitter tones. "Make up this pretty little story as you go along. Your stage training has taught you how to hoodwink the people. Go on."

The Senator looked doubtfully at him for a moment, but said nothing, while Jacqueline went on:

"Such he was when he asked me to run away with him and be happy. I knew that he meant me no honor, and I refused. Then he asked me to marry him, and I consented. He told me that our marriage must be kept a secret and I consented again. He said that he was dependent on his uncle for help, and that there was only one way in which we could be happy. I must run away alone, in such a way as to throw suspicion on some one else, and join Oliver in Baltimore where we could be quietly married."

Here she paused a moment as if to collect her scattered memories, and it was aunt Mary who said:

"And thee consented?"

"I did."

She paused again.

"And what else?" asked the Senator. "Why do you hesitate?"

"The worst is to come," she answered, in a low tone. "Had he only deceived me, all might have been hushed up, for what is the name of a poor girl to a rich family?"

"You are wrong," said the Senator, sharply.

"Such was never my doctrine. If Harvey deceived you, he should have married you, and the same with Oliver."

The old man looked sternly at his nephew as he spoke, and Oliver turned away his eyes.

Jacqueline went on speaking, very low now:

"Oliver told me that he was in business straits, and needed money. He had the secret combination of your safe-key, and had marked a package of bonds, which he told me to take when I went away. He told me they were his property, left in your charge for safe-keeping, and I believed him. I went to your study while you were out; found the key where he told me I should find it; opened the safe, and took out the package—"

"You see," interrupted Oliver, at this moment—"she confesses the theft. Can you depend on a thief's evidence any further? I shall send for an officer to arrest this jade."

"One moment," observed Trevlac's deep voice; "this witness is turning State's evidence. You cannot stir till she is through her story."

"Cannot?" asked Oliver, angrily. "Who will stop me?"

"I for one, and fifty besides," was the cool reply. "My men are close by here, within call."

"Your men? Your tramps," said Oliver, disdainfully.

"Not so," answered Trevlac, gravely. "They are true Romanichalor, and their rags were but a disguise, like mine. You may remember how they treated your friends in Pittsburgh. Stay where you are. I told you your time would come. Go on, Jacqueline."

From that moment a haggard look came over Oliver's face, and Jacqueline proceeded:

"The package was marked on the outside, 'In consecutive numbers. Oliver Calvert.' Here is the envelope, which I have kept ever since."

She handed a dirty, tattered envelope to the Senator, who took it and examined it, gravely.

"What is this inside?" he asked.

"We will come to that," she answered. "I took those bonds, left the house quietly, and told my pupil, Helen Chester, that I was going away to be married. She promised to keep my secret, and has kept it to the present day."

The Senator looked at Helen.

"Is that true, Helen?"

"It is, sir."

"That was all I told her; for I did not trust her with Oliver's name. She was young and romantic, and knew nothing of the perils of a runaway match, in which the woman risks all, the man nothing. I went away, met Oliver at Baltimore, and there we were married by a justice of the peace—"

"Who was none," interrupted Oliver, triumphantly. "I told you so, next day."

Jacqueline looked at him with a glance that told of the guard she was keeping over herself.

"You did," she answered. "You even taunted me with my disgrace. Do you remember what happened when you ventured so far?"

Oliver looked confused, but made no reply.

"I will tell you, sir," she went on to Senator Calvert. "When I found out, too late, that I had been the dupe of a villain I stabbed him in my despair and rage. He was the stronger, and wrenched away my stiletto after I had wounded him, slightly. Then, even while we were struggling, the door opened, and in came your son."

The Senator uttered a cry of surprise.

"My son! How came he there?"

"That I learned afterward. As I had confided in Helen, Oliver had confided in your son, and, like me, he had concealed from his confidant the name of the person he was going to marry, after exacting from him his promise, on the word of a gentleman, that he would never expose Oliver to your wrath, no matter what might happen. He knew Harvey well, the villain, and counted on his honor to save himself. But he had not counted on Harvey's penetration, and your son followed us to Baltimore, where he found us in a house that Oliver had told me was a boarding-house. It was the same in which, a week later, you saw Harvey and me."

The Senator drew a deep breath and looked at Oliver, who smiled in the old, disdainful way.

"A very pretty story. Prove it."

"The proof lies in the fact that you left the house without the money that I had stolen for you, fleeing like a guilty creature. You were overreached in your villainy. Had you waited a few days, trusting fool that I was then, you might have laughed at me safely. As it was, I had the money still and you fled to Philadelphia to hide your tracks. Harvey reproached me bitterly for my duplicity, and left me in anger, so that there I was, alone in a strange city in a house that I knew too late to be one of bad character, and I had with me that package of stolen bonds which had now changed to so many accusing fiends in my conscience."

Again she was silent till aunt Mary's gentle voice said:

"Poor girl! What did thee do?"

"I do not know," she answered, in a dreary voice. "How that week passed I shudder to remember. Suffice that at the end of a week I went out one evening, bought a pistol, and had made up my mind to kill myself, when again, to my terror and amazement, I met Harvey Calvert."

"And what did he say?" asked Helen, breathlessly. "Tell all, Jacqueline."

"He saved my life and turned me from the ways of sin," said the girl, solemnly. "To save my guilty self he periled his own name, went with me to the house where I was living a wretched, sinful life and induced me to leave it. I had just told him the whole story and given him the greater part of the stolen bonds, when the police broke into the house, guided by Oliver's agent."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CONCLUSION.

"And what became of Harvey?" asked the Senator, anxiously.

"He escaped over the roof to the end of the street, and I was left alone, with five thousand dollars, which he gave me under my promise of reform. When the police broke in, as you know, I shot them. I expected to be arrested and exposed in court, but you spared me that humiliation, for which I thank you. I left Baltimore and led for the next seven years a wandering and aimless life, sometimes joining a Romany band, at others dancing in variety halls, where I took the name of the Countess Cachuca. I found that I was very successful in assuming boy characters, and this finally led me, when I had quite run out of funds, to assume a boy's dress and a fair wig, in which guise I revisited Calverton. I had not heard of Harvey Calvert in all those years, and I longed to catch a glimpse of him and Helen in their own home, for I hoped to find them married and happy."

Here Helen blushed furiously; but Trevlac's face never altered its look of settled gravity. Oliver Calvert set his teeth hard as he heard Jacqueline speak.

"The first person I saw," pursued the girl, "was the villain who had turned me into a wretched tramp of the highway, and in that moment all my wrongs came over me with a rush, and I shot him, as you all know. He knew me, too, spite of my disguise. I saw it in his face as he fell back. Then I fled to the camp

of the tramps and recognized in their king, Harvey Calvert. Then, too, I learned for the first time the mischief I had done; heard it from those lips that had been closed to my shame and had never said a harsh word to me in my punishment. In that moment I took my solemn oath to see justice done, and now, thank God, I have done it!"

The Senator rose, trembling.

"Harvey, my son, can you forgive me?" he faltered. "Now, indeed, I am prouder of my noble son than ever before. Forgive me, boy." The stalwart form of his son shook all over with emotion as he asked in a husky voice:

"Have I kept my word, sir?"

"You have acted like a knight of the olden time and I glory in my son," cried the old man, fondly, as he clasped the form of his son close to his heart after seven years' loss.

The rest, all but Oliver, looked silently on with moistened eyes; but as soon as the old man's emotion had subsided, young Harvey Calvert—for so he must now be called—turned to his cousin.

His whole countenance seemed changed to one of resolute fierceness as he said:

"Oliver Calvert, do you deny you married this lady?"

"I do."

The answer was given with a snarl like a wild beast. The coward was in a corner and meant fight.

"Produce your evidence, Jacqueline," Harvey spoke out with a voice like a bugle call.

"It is here," said the girl, and forth from the tattered envelope she drew a paper, stained with age, but plain to be seen as a wedding certificate signed by a justice of the peace.

"Who gave you that?" asked Harvey.

"You did," was the startling reply.

"Is it genuine?"

"Yes, sirree!" suddenly said the hoarse voice of Mr. Billy Barlow, as the Boss of the Bummers nodded affably to the circle. "It air as genuine as ary paper in this State. Mr. Calvert thought as how old Squire Doubleday's time were out, when he married him and Mrs. Jacko there; but it warn't by about three hours. They was spliced at nine and the squire's time warn't out till twelve. 'Twere a smart trick of Mr. Harvey's to git that paper out of the squire, and no mistake."

Oliver glared at his cousin.

"So all your boasted honor didn't prevent you from exposing me," he snarled, savagely.

"Not so," answered Harvey, promptly. "It is Jacqueline who exposes you; I only saved you from State's prison. Come, confess even now, before it is too late. All here are ready to forgive you, even Jacqueline; for these women are all the same."

"Oliver!" said Jacqueline, softly, "I did not wish your wife disgraced. Forgive me my temper, dear. I am not guiltless. I will try to make you happy."

But, Oliver's only answer was a contemptuous sneer. Then he turned to his uncle.

"And you intend to condemn me on the perjured evidence of a thief and a jail-bird like this Barlow?"

The Senator looked cold and stern as he answered:

"Oliver, I have been deceived a long time but I am not blind forever. Your wife shall be my special care, in that she has given me back my son. For yourself never darken my doors again or venture to harm her. If you do either, that safe robbery will come up against you. Go!"

Without another word Oliver left the place and was seen no more that night.

"And as for you, sir," continued the old Senator, turning to his son with affected sternness; "you have been away so long that I suppose you have forgotten how to obey me."

"Try me, sir," was the quiet answer.

"Will you do anything I tell you?" asked the Senator.

"Anything in my power, sir."

"Then marry this young lady," cried the Senator, in his jolliest tones.

As he spoke he pushed Helen into Harvey's arms, which gently closed round her as the young man asked:

"Helen, will you marry me?"

Her answer was not audible, but it seemed to be satisfactory, for the old Senator laughed aloud and cried out:

"Into the house, all of you, and we'll give the Gipsies such a feast in the kitchen as they never had in their lives!"

To close our story but little remains to be told. Mr. Peter Griengro was married to Gipsy Nan on the same day that Harvey Calvert married Helen Chester.

A Romany colony gathered around Calverton where the rovers settled down, as the majority of Gipsies do in the United States, whenever they get a chance, and became basket-makers, cutlers, horse-trainers, weavers and all sorts of things except agriculturists.

Jacqueline Calvert, her wild, roving life over, settled down into a quiet, retired little woman in black, living all alone in a corner of the great house at Calverton and seldom seen save by her Romany comrades of old.

Oliver Calvert never made his appearance again at Calverton, and soon after sold out his interest in the Air-Line Road, taking to gambling in faro chips instead of stocks. As a result he disappeared from society in the course of a year and no one knew what became of him. No one except Billy Barlow.

The veteran Boss of the Bummers came across him on the road three years later, a drunken tramp of his own besotted order.

How the two first fought each other and afterward got drunk together, is matter of common history among the Atlantic seaboard tramps, who are all agreed on one point, that the Boss of the Bummers got the best of "Slippery Noll," as Oliver was nicknamed.

But the same authorities are all further agreed that 1877 was their beyday and that they have never had any luck since they lost the KING OF THE TRAMPS.

THE END.

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